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YOUR ADOLESCENT

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Lawrence K. Frank and Mary Frank

Authors of HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD IN SCHOOL

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Your Adolescent at Home and in School

Mary and Lawrence K. Frank



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PREFACE

This book was written for parents, teachers, and others concerned with adolescent boys and girls. It tries to offer not only understanding and insight about these young people, but also a statement of faith and confidence in parents and teachers, who have been under fire so frequently from various critics.

It also expresses our conviction that young people have many potentialities for coping with the tasks and problems of our day, and that these potentialities need to be adequately developed and utilized in our schools and in our communities.

We are indebted to many investigators, teachers, counselors, therapists, and others who have observed young people and have contributed from their first-hand knowledge; to the novelists, playwrights, and poets who have portrayed the struggles of youth to attain adulthood; and to the numerous adolescents and young men and women we have known—not excluding our own offspring—and with whom we have shared some of their trials and triumphs.

We want to thank those who during the writing of this book contributed directly as friendly critics and advisers, as assistants and as secretaries. Specifically we are indebted to Dr. Peter Blos, Dr. Elizabeth Gilkeson, Dr. William Marvin, and Dr. Frances Wilson for reading all or parts of the manuscript during its various stages; to Mrs. Clarice Rosenthal for her untiring search for materials and sources of information (many of her findings have had to be omitted because of space limitations); to Mrs. Dorothy Killam and Miss Miriam Freed for editorial and

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secretarial help in the preparation and revision of the manuscript.

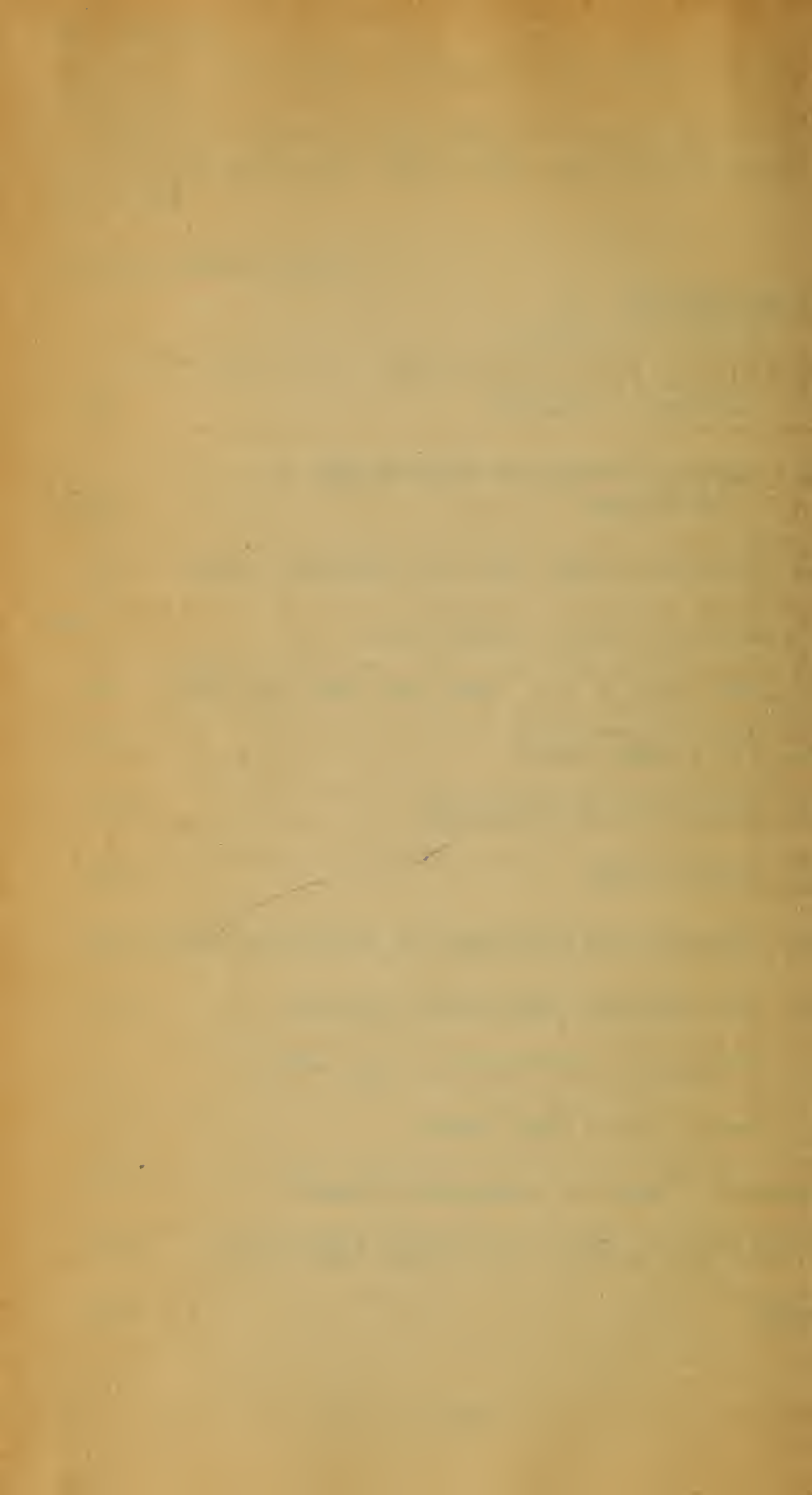
Finally we want to acknowledge the contributions of Lawrence B. Frank, Dr. Alan Frank, and Marjorie Frank De Vries.

Belmont, Massachusetts

MARY H. FRANK
LAWRENCE K. FRANK

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PEAKING FOR PARENTS

This book is an attempt to bring together for parents some of the ideas about adolescents that have come from many different sources: from anthropology, psychology, psychiatry; from our own experiences and those of our friends; from the observations of kind and qualified people who read parts of the book in manuscript. We have tried to give you a picture of each adolescent *as well as* of the world in which he lives, for every adolescent today grows up in a world that is different from the one we or our parents knew. To understand the way he behaves, the tasks he faces, the problems he may have, it is important to understand what the world asks of our adolescents as well as what young people bring to it in terms of capacities, strengths, sureness or unsureness about themselves.

NEW PARENTS—NEW TASKS

But before we talk about adolescents we would like to talk about parents, for many parents of adolescents reading this book are fearful about themselves and about their children's problems. Parents have read or heard various criticisms of today's family life; but they may be unaware of the importance of the good things they have given their children. We would like to offer them a vote of confidence, so that they can approach the problems of their adolescents with the feeling that what they have given their children is valuable and needs to be conserved for their own families and for others.

This fearfulness arises largely from what we feel is expected of us as parents. Many parents of children who are now in adolescence can recall how, as young parents, they set themselves new goals in family living: to rear children who

would be healthy, psychologically and physically; to enjoy their children, to make their children companions who would accept and not reject the parents' love; to do everything possible in helping them toward happy and fruitful lives.

To achieve these goals parents sought help in understanding their children's growth, physical and emotional. They also looked for expert advice on what was the "right" thing to do in rearing children. Once upon a time the doctor and the preacher may have offered the healing medicine for body and soul respectively, but in recent times parents have wanted something more. Not only have they sought to prevent rickets with Vitamin D, but they have also wanted preventive medicine of a psychological nature that would stave off unhappiness and problems. These goals, we may say, were commendable and worth while; they were also brand-new in the history of parenthood.

In setting these tasks for themselves, parents were guided by the ideas which had developed in professional work with children and adults. They were told that emotional problems are not accidental, or even hereditary, but often the result of deep trauma or hurt early in life. Freud and others showed that disturbed individuals usually carry with them from infancy strong reactions to the harmful treatment they received, and that they vent those feelings, often without seeming reason, on the people around them. Parents heard that harsh disciplinary measures could be the cause of problems rather than the cure for them.

Therefore a parent could no longer view his child's anti-social acts as inborn "bad nature." Once upon a time a child's misbehavior was his own fault, and it was up to parents in his early days, and up to him later on, to purge those vices with strong medicine. But, with the new teachings, even religious guides acknowledged that little children could become destructive because of what had been done to them unwisely.

Parents sought help in managing their children because they knew only what had been their own family patterns, and "managing" a child's tantrums or destructiveness in a new way was new work! It meant all sorts of changes: changes in the way you talked to children; "holding back" when you were angry; not "jumping on" every piece of misconduct; not calling acts "bad" that were merely childish.

In many cases parents of the new era in child-raising felt closer to their children, able to love them and to show love without feeling that the youngsters would become spoiled,

disrespectful, or unruly. But in a great many instances mistakes were made (which always occurs when new ideas develop). Both the advisers and the parents were wrong at times: ideas that came from psychiatric practice, for example, created havoc when they were put in practice at home.

Also, many parents developed unhappy attitudes about themselves. At first they thought that *all* problems could be prevented. But when problems did come parents felt guilty—responsible for what they had done to their children. So the parent, not the child, was on the spot as the troublemaker, and the parent became more and more dependent on the help of the “expert,” even when the expert knew no answers.

PARENTS' ATTITUDES TO THEMSELVES

It might be helpful to look at and revise some of the attitudes that parents have developed toward themselves.

1. You may be shocked when problems arise which you thought had been anticipated and avoided. You have loved your child, and it is important to remember that this love is good. And yet along come troubles. Especially when he approaches puberty you may find that the sometimes depressed, resentful, or sullen young person hurts you deeply and seems to reject your care and kindness. He seems to be a different person from the child who has been close to you, and you feel like a different person from the parent who has loved him and been loved in return.

At this point it is important to realize that, even with all the love in the world, a child must face some perplexities, make mistakes, find his own solutions. With parents' love behind him he can be strong enough to meet these tests.

Also, it is essential for parents to understand that there are nodal points, or critical periods, in people's lives, during which special attention and help can make a difference in their futures. The kind of help the young person receives, and not the problem itself, often determines the course an adolescent will take in his next few years. It is important to recognize these growing-up points or nodal periods, as we call them, because they are often associated with new situations that demand new behavior in the young person. The threshold of puberty is one such nodal point. Others, for example, can be the time a young person has to choose a career, or marries, or has a child, and so on. Often parents are alarmed when a boy or girl becomes antagonistic in early

adolescence, or when he can't do his work in early high-school years, or when he goes through a personal depression in the first years after college. If parents realize that all adolescents go through similar crises they may feel less worried.

2. You are bewildered when your children rebel against you or reject you outright. In early parenthood you thought this happened only because parents had been harsh and inflexible. But you, who have tried hard to be a kind, understanding parent, receive the same kind of rejection (more open, perhaps) that your own parents experienced. Well, we might as well face it: at some point we parents are going to experience the rejection of our children; every generation will say, "Poor old Mom and Pop." Each child, each adolescent disagrees with his parents at some point, as he becomes a thinking person, as he strengthens his own powers, as he works with his friends and with other people. His responsibilities, his self-control, his ideas must become part of a new life, not extensions of the parents' lives.

3. You feel guilty over what you may have done to your children, even though many experts tell you *not* to feel guilty. However, guilt seems to be an offshoot of love. If you love someone deeply enough you do feel guilty when you suspect you have hurt him. But guilt (as far as we are concerned here) is not bad! What people *do to allay guilt* may be harmful—pretending the problems don't exist, protecting the hurt one from any other experiences that may seem harmful, blaming someone else (and teaching the hurt one to blame someone else). Feelings—even guilt—are often safeguards as long as they don't destroy the love or need for love from which they come. As parents we are not alone in feeling guilty; maybe we feel especially so because the people we have hurt are so very dear. We do have to realize that guilt, like other emotions, may disturb us, but we don't have to "blame" the guilt on children or "blame" ourselves for having it.

Along with a sense of guilt parents today may have a sense of failure. But that is neither unusual nor wrong. It is only the desperate attempt to hide this feeling, to hurt those who have hurt you, to "get even," which may injure; the blind business of shouting loud enough, talking fast enough, working up enough indignation to convince yourself and your family that you are not a failure—this sets family life a-tilt. We have to start thinking of "failure" as a word which you cannot apply to human beings unless you want them to stop trying altogether.

THE "UNCOOPERATIVE" PARENT

In a boy's or girl's adolescence parents may begin to feel in a "no man's land" situation, for none of the advice regarding little children seems to help them, while the warnings about delinquent youth scare them. They hear this kind of general advice: "Parents, why not look at the things you are doing (or have done) to your children? Inspect yourselves to see where you may have caused unhappiness." Those who pay attention are the essentially good parents, who often fret and stew in silence over what they may have done to their offspring in the past! However, this self-inspection may also be the final straw for the weary camel, and the parent may say, "I'll be darned if I'll say that my child's troubles are the result of an unhappy childhood. It was a good childhood, and I know it." In indignation he refuses to cooperate with the schools, the teachers, or the therapists.

We are not talking at random. We have seen any number of these parents of adolescents who are unable to turn to teachers, to guidance personnel, or even to friends for help concerning their young people. Of course, it is impossible to give advice that applies to all parents. They are too different in background and temperament; they are different in the ways they apply advice. The core of a child's problems lies in the very specific family from which he has come—including the fact that he, too, is a different person from his parents. We will discuss the family situation more fully in Chapter 6.

So the professional (often a teacher) throws up his hands in despair. "What are you going to do with parents?"

Professionals may not realize what they are asking when they say to parents en masse: "Inspect yourselves and your feelings to find where you may really feel resentful toward your children. (Meanwhile don't feel guilty.)" One of the most difficult lessons any human being has to learn in growing up and getting along with other people is recognition of what he does to others, of how his own words and actions affect the people around him. It would be a strange world if everyone were conscious of the feelings he called up in others; sometimes it isn't even helpful to be so "conscious." It is a very rare marriage where, even after years of living with a spouse, each partner is able to see where he hurts the other, where he annoys or deflates his mate. Psychotherapy is the process in which people *do* look at themselves, and it is often a long, painful one for an individual. To see how his

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feelings and behavior really affect others, and to *alter that behavior*, is no mean feat.

With children it is even more difficult to understand where we mismanage or make mistakes, because children don't tell you directly. What may be plainly evident about a child's behavior to a guidance person is often completely blank to the parent. An added emotional obstacle, of course, is the parent's resistance to admitting having hurt someone he loves! When we are asked to look at ourselves, then, we can realize that it is not easy—and that it may be devastating unless we believe in ourselves.

WHY DO PARENTS MAKE MISTAKES?

Do we make mistakes? Certainly—most often with the conviction that we are doing the right, the best, the wisest thing. Parents used to let babies cry themselves blue in the days when schedules were the rule. But the "wise people" considered that right and proper; nobody then knew it was a "mistake."

Many people say that parents err in relying too much on advice. They ask, "Why is today's parent so dependent on experts? Why do parents feel bereft if no one pats them on the back in friendship to say, 'You are very necessary to your own children, and for the continuation of human love'?"

Parents have always been dependent on others, on their leaders, on their priests, on their teachers. Long ago parents' rules, regulations, traditions, beliefs, ideas, superstitions were so interwoven with those of the group that they were part of the same cloth; the parents' ways and the ways of the group were synonymous. To produce the kind of child that the tribe or the government wanted, parents did what the wise men said was good and proper. What if it hurt? Did they "hate" their children so much? We can't believe that. Rather, parents wanted to be sure that they were rearing a child best fitted for the station or post he had to fill. In doing the "right" thing parents and children were given acceptance and approval by their group.

Until our generation few parents have had the task of trying painfully to unravel what the wise men were saying, to apply it in family living, and to carry through alone without the tacit and full approval of their group. Parents may make mistakes in interpreting what the wise men say, especially if the advice seems vague.

Many critics also say that today's parents make mistakes in protecting their children. But parents have always been the protectors of children until the children were old enough and strong enough to look out for themselves. Remember the Bible story of Solomon and the two mothers? Both go before the monarch because each claims that a certain child is her own. Solomon commands that the child be cut in half. The real mother, rather than let her child be harmed, gives up her claim to the child—and of course the king discovers that she is the true parent.

It is not "wrong" to want to protect a child, to feel a deep ache when he weeps, to suffer in solitude when he goes into battle. It is not "bad" to wish him supreme happiness and success in his job, in his marriage.

However, as a child grows into adolescence he faces increasingly the task of living in the grown-up world. Like us, he has a dependence on the world outside home, on other adults and young people, for helping him build an image of himself as competent, accepted, likable. He needs his parents' trust, but he also needs to build up strengths with people other than his parents. Here is where parents often unknowingly make blunders. Though their child is a child no longer, the parents still want to protect him against physical or psychological harm, and they may hold on to him lest he damage himself in the eyes of others.

Again, lacking the support of preachers, teachers, or neighbors, a parent may depend too heavily on the child to reflect back the image of a good parent who has done a good job. You find, then, that in a child's adolescence parents may become overprotective or overharsh; they may demand too much of an adolescent, or nothing at all, depending on what they feel is a "good" parent's job.

This is why we say that parents' love is good but needs expression in a way that reaches a child and strengthens him *at his stage of development*. In other words, while our love remains constant and not "wrong" or dangerous for children, we may need to show it in terms that mean something to a growing person, rather than in ways or words that remind him of his childhood dependence on us.

Therapists and guidance personnel who work with adolescents say that they meet many overprotected young people. Such boys and girls may in late adolescence feel incapable of working, of tackling jobs, of relating themselves to others. We like to describe these young people as *underprivileged when little and overprivileged as they grow up*. Often they

did not receive the protection due a little child when they needed it: the parent may have been disgusted by the typically childish acts of a little boy or girl. As an adolescent, however, the youth may have been showered with protection and *things* in order to keep him close to his parent. Overprotection usually means keeping a boy or girl so close, so dependent, that he has no steam of his own to go out to other people.

OUTSIDE HOME

You will find in this book an emphasis on the world beyond home of which each adult and adolescent is part, which influences him, his ideas, his tasks as a young person or as a parent. We have tried to show that, whether we realize it fully or not, we as parents are dependent on other people—neighbors, teachers, guides spiritual or temporal—for our self-images and the way we do our jobs. The true value of parents lies not merely in being disciplinarians or in teaching neatness or good health habits, but primarily in keeping humanity human, in raising adults capable of giving love and consideration to others, adults who can sort out what is wise in their own families and in their communities.

You read about juvenile delinquency and maladjustment in youth today, and you may blame youth's sickness, as many others do, on parents' lack of responsibility in disciplining their children. Yet in most cases the therapist or social worker who knows these disturbed young people finds: (a) that their parents were often harsh disciplinarians; (b) that they grew up in a part of our society where they were regarded with suspicion or distaste, where they have had little help or opportunity in finding places for being sociable and developing their capacities. The parents of these boys and girls may be displaced persons in the sense that they are no longer part of a group that holds the same standards for its members and for their children. The parents may be preoccupied in their personal lives with the effects of displacement: suspicion of next-door neighbors; distrust, dislike, or actual violation of the community regulations that make for peaceful living. At the same time these adults may be plagued by self-dissatisfaction, insecurity, and a feeling of unimportance.

Thus their children can come up against the shell of bitterness which the parents exhibit to them, and they can inherit the displacement in society, which means isolation from other

adults who care about them and could help them. In lesser measure we are all parts of new communities where the next-door neighbor is a comparative stranger. Even our "normal" young people may be regarded with suspicion, especially if they do any "hell-raising." All too quickly the child outside one's own family circle may be viewed with distaste as a troublemaker or a potential bad example for one's own child.

It is important that parents realize their children's need for other people outside the home—for adults as well as for other adolescents. You'll find many such adults in your schools. They are very much a part of your child's psychological growth as well as of his intellectual progress. You'll need them more as your children grow older and reject the advice you may give about their tasks, their careers, their futures. The boy or girl must know that he can turn to them for help or advice; sometimes their criticism is more easily absorbed and respected than your own.

SPEAKING OF TEACHERS

Our good teachers need our support, for they, too, are being blamed for the ills of the world. Teachers, according to the critics, have erred on the side of humanitarianism. We hear that, in trying to be "kind" to children, teachers have failed to discipline them and teach respect for authority, and are at least partly responsible for a large group of young misfits.

Good teachers, overworked in overcrowded schools, often without adequate materials to illustrate what they want to teach, react as good parents do: they bridle in indignant self-defense. Like the parent, the teacher has worked mainly for unselfish ends, receiving very little in reward except the intangible, the better development of a human being.

Actually the teacher, like the parent, has new social problems to deal with. Out of a mixed group of young people she (or he) has to weld a group where self-discipline must be learned, where every member becomes aware of his ethical responsibility to others, where he gains self-respect and respect for others, where he formulates values that he will take to living in the future.

This sounds like a tall order. Hasn't the adolescent formed those values earlier in life? Must teachers become preachers, too? What has the parent been doing all these years, if not teaching those values?

It is our feeling that when family groups are scattered apart over the country, when the small family has no real allegiance to its neighbors, something happens to *group ethics* in America. You can have youth taught by parents and clergy to be upright, honest, clean-living, and yet find that young people feel no responsibility for "the other fellow" in their community. In the past, although various sections of our country may have feuded bitterly with one another, nevertheless within each group there were bonds of tradition that formed the bases for living together. There were allegiances between families. The individual, while captain of his own soul, was also important to his group, as it was to him. He behaved well in the community largely because he cared about the respect and good will of others, and they usually cared about him.

In criticizing today's education it is very easy to make the broad generalization that there is too much emphasis on "social" or "group" behavior. Such criticism goes on to say that there is too much social-mindedness in all our living today, and too little emphasis on individual responsibility.

In reality there is a great deal of what could be called "sociability" in today's life for adolescents and adults—an accent on "sociable" behavior or manners. The result is often superficial "sociability" rather than true social living.

However, aside from superficial behavior, there may be little true belonging to any one group. While the boy or girl may be law-abiding or good as an individual, he may have no loyalties to any special group of people; he may be uncertain about whom he can trust, or about who trusts him. As an individual he may have the makings of a fine person and yet have little opportunity to practice the habits of give-and-take that make up a good family or a good community. He may be beholden to no one and be nobody's keeper, so to speak. He may be as terrified as his parents by the "gangster" tactics of other young people he sees or hears about, and yet feel unable to cope with those tactics alone.

Educators are beginning to see that the "normal" young person today is weak not for lack of courage but for lack of adult helpers! Ten to twenty years ago we thought that freedom at home and in school would release all kinds of individual courage and ability in children, but now we find that young people need some direction and help in their freedom. They need to know what are some of the goals that adults believe in; they need to know what adults feel is good or bad, right or wrong; they need allies other than parents. We realize

that the little child who is unlimited or undirected by his father or mother is greatly confused because he doesn't know what his parents want him to do. The adolescent is confused when he is taught in history that we hold certain values and yet is given no clue as to what his tutors expect of him and his agemates.

Many teachers today are in exactly the same boat as parents: 1. They do not want to "moralize" with young people—that is, they do not want to teach superficial behavior or sham values. Rather, like parents, they would like young people to have a genuine concern for others. 2. Teachers have read and heard almost continuously lectures on the importance of helping the "problem" child and the "normal" child who has problems. Teachers, parents, want to help the lost child, the one who most needs help—which may be one reason why they became teachers. 3. Teachers have assumed that, given enough chance to grow in freedom, the child will inevitably learn to choose right from wrong, to sort out "good" behavior and unacceptable behavior, to put the aggressor in his place.

We feel that teachers, like parents, have made some mistakes—not in loving children, or in giving them a chance to grow, but in taking for granted a strength in young people to stand up for right and just principles in their groups.

We feel that boys and girls ought to know where the adult stands, where his convictions lie concerning aggression and injustice in and out of the classroom. Today's emphasis on group living in schools is expected to be for the good of the individual, so that he can know there are others like him who have ideals and want to translate them into good adult living. All "good" behavior is not goody-goody; teachers, we feel, need very often to explain that they represent an adult world that is orderly and believes in safeguarding the adolescent's right to be a decent person. A teacher, like a parent, can be a good friend and companion to children and yet say, "No, that behavior isn't good, and we can't accept it." Teachers and parents in many cases have leaned over backward in order not to be rejected as "preachy" or old-fashioned.

The acceptance by a good adult with some convictions about what is right and wrong for today's world is one of the biggest needs of every adolescent. The adolescent often vehemently rejects the too "gushy" or too kind adult because at his time of life (as he did even when he was younger) he urgently needs those who will let him grow as a person and understand his need for integrity and self-respect. We need

teachers and parents with a sense of humor, who can give young people a feeling that it is a happy world full of people with whom they can talk the same language.

We cannot agree with the critics who say that more discipline at home and at school, more fear of authority, will turn the tide in favor of better-adjusted adolescents. But we do need to work for a school and family life that is based on the strengths of young people and that offers them some of the wisdom of adults. A teacher with convictions of her own who respects the adolescent is often the one person who gives boys and girls the feeling that they can have some convictions of *their* own. Adolescents find that these adults help clear up their own confusions. They see *values-in-action*, something they can grasp in a concrete situation, a pattern of adulthood outside home.

Yes, we teachers and parents have made mistakes; we have made mistakes that our grandparents would have heard about in wide-eyed amazement. "You mean to say you haven't told children it was wrong to do so-and-so? How could they know otherwise?" On the other hand, we have learned and done many, many good things at home and in education. When you see parents enjoying their children and children who are learning to become kind authorities, absorbing the ways of behaving in family life that will make peace-loving, honest men and women, you find a good deal to be proud of.

The rearing and education of all the children is no easier than a government of all the people: in our diversified problems, in our resolution to listen to every group and its needs, we face difficulties and make mistakes. But those are correctible too, not by going backward but by using mistakes as steps in going forward.

We have tried to give our own bird's-eye view of what has happened to many parents over years of looking for and listening to professional advice. Perhaps we err in defense of the parent, but we strongly feel that compassion for the disturbed child or the disturbed adult is not enough. What we need is an understanding of the "normal" parents of our age who have had to puzzle their way through the varying advice of the obstetrician, the pediatrician, the nursery-school teacher, the school psychiatrist, and still hold up their heads and trust themselves. Now they must deal with the Franks! Good luck to them!

PHYSICAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN ADOLESCENCE

During the ten-year span from about ten to twenty years of age the juvenile body of the child is being transformed into the adult body of the man or woman. Not only does the child grow larger, taller, heavier, usually stronger and more capable of various activities, but the genital organs and reproductive system develop. This is the period when the heredity of the child operates in the emergence of whatever body build, physiological capacities, and latent skills he or she may have derived from parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents.

The human being has a prolonged period of adolescence, in contrast to the very short adolescence, or absence of such a period, in all other organisms. This slow pace, like the long period of infancy, makes it possible for the human child to integrate his changing physical characteristics and functions as he learns to live in the adult social world. But this lengthy adolescence also means that the boy or girl is exposed to various interferences with normal maturation as he or she faces the many difficult life tasks and personal problems.

Before we can discuss adolescent behavior we must try to understand these processes of physical growth. They operate in similar ways in all boys and girls, but produce widely different men and women. They are dependable and well-regulated life processes, as orderly as are the processes of fertilization and prenatal growth that produce the infant. Occasionally, but surprisingly infrequently in the total population, something goes wrong; something interrupts or distorts the usual growth pattern; a child is born handicapped, or, in his later development, fails to mature normally. But even after such impairments the normal processes of development resume, so that a child or adolescent, despite his disability—

crippled, blind, deaf, or paralyzed—will continue to mature in his individual way.

The processes of growth, similar in all children, produce individuals different not only in physiological capacities but in their ways of learning, responding, and relating themselves to the world. How each boy or girl finds his or her way to adulthood is a dramatic story because the physical development of the adolescent can never be treated apart from his feelings for and relations with his family, his friends, and especially his age group.

DIFFERENCES OF DEVELOPMENT IN BOYS AND GIRLS

While boys and girls grow in a more or less similar way during childhood, in the period of adolescence girls generally move ahead of boys. In a group of boys and girls of about the same age, more girls than boys begin to increase in height and to show early signs of development—budding of breasts, rounding of hips, growth of pubic and underarm hair. Some girls, but not all, grow taller than most the boys of their own—or even a slightly older—age.

Chronological age—the number of years a child has lived since birth—has little meaning or physiological significance in the period from ten to twenty. Each boy or girl begins to grow more rapidly when the body is ready for these changes. Some reach this time earlier than others; a few are relatively slow and apparently backward compared with those who are nearer the average. But both the early- and later-maturing children are normal, although parents and the child himself may be troubled about any such situation. Children are basically conservative: they want to be like others. When a girl grows taller than her brother—who may be a year or two older—and also is ahead of the boys in her class, she may be uneasy, especially when the boys are disturbed by her superior height and show their resentment openly.

These early-maturing girls are developing sexually before the boys. They become aware of boys as young males; they are becoming more socially conscious and desirous of masculine attention, but the boys are puzzled and unable to understand what is happening to the girls. At this time there may be considerable rivalry and open conflict between boys and girls in school classes. The boys do not realize what is going on, so they show their bewilderment by being rough

and clumsy, rude and aggressive toward the girls. The girls, for their part, disdain these tough "little boys" who won't dance, dress up, or even keep clean, and whose conversation is chiefly jeers and epithets. Girls, being likely to excel in schoolwork, put the boys at a further disadvantage. These strained relations climax the years just preceding, in which boys and girls have been drawing apart, playing separately, gradually splitting into male and female groups as if in preparation for adolescent transformations. In a few more years this period of mutual rejection will be replaced by an overwhelming desire on the part of both boys and girls to spend most of their time in one another's company.

In these early years of adolescence the obvious alterations in appearance may blind us to other dramatic changes that are taking place in boys' and girls' enlarged awareness, their sharpened perception and growing realization of what is going on around them. It is as if in childhood they had been wearing smoked—or rosy-tinted—glasses, which they now take off, and they begin to see the world and its people clearly for the first time. The metaphor gives a clue to the increasing sensitivity, the frequent emotional upsets of adolescents, because they find themselves in a strange, often threatening, world.

Some understanding of the developmental processes and how they operate is essential to an understanding of what is happening to any individual boy or girl. We shall first describe the general aspects of this period and then look at the variations and differences shown by individual boys and girls.

STAGES IN THE PROCESS OF MATURATION

The development of boys and girls into adult males and females takes place along more or less parallel lines, but, of course, with profoundly different outcomes because of their specialized functional capacities and their different orientations to life. The period in the life span from approximately ten to twenty may be divided, for ease of description, into three steps or stages. These are never sharply isolated but may be observed by certain indications in the progressive approach to adulthood. Thus we may recognize:

1. the prepubertal stage
2. puberty
3. postpuberty, or true adolescence.

THE PREPUBERTAL STAGE

This stage begins around the age of nine or ten or eleven—occasionally later—depending upon the individual child; in girls it starts, on the average, before it does in boys. Growth, which has been continuous from birth, is accelerated at this time. The prepubertal child, especially the girl, usually grows taller and heavier; the reproductive organs begin to mature as the time approaches when they will begin to function. As boys and girls come closer to puberty, they show marked changes in their usual behavior. Some begin to withdraw from the family, preferring to be often alone. Some may react with irritation and even with strong rebellious feelings to the most innocent and friendly remarks, which appear to them critical or antagonistic. There is also a growing awareness of sex and of sex differences, and a marked concern over the appearance of their changing bodies. This behavior is the outward expression of a growing tension in the boy or girl; and this tension is also apparent in restlessness, moodiness, and “fits of depression”—all very difficult for parents to accept and understand, and, let us remember, also difficult for the boy and girl.

The child's body, from early years, has had both male and female sex hormones in roughly equal proportions. In the prepubertal period these hormones may increase very rapidly, so that the boy has more of the male and the girl more of the female hormones circulating in the bloodstream. This increase in the male or female hormones, which is fostering maturation of the sexual organs for puberty, means that all other organs and functional processes must adjust to it and learn to function on another level. For a while, then, the growing body of the boy or girl is apt to be unstable, subject to various ups and downs.

THE PUBERTAL PERIOD

Puberty is like a threshold over which a child passes when changing from a juvenile to an adolescent organism, on his or her way to becoming an adult. Puberty marks the beginning—and we should emphasize that it is only the beginning—of sexual functioning. There may be several years of further growth and development before the boy and girl reach adult functioning and become capable of procreation.

Puberty occurs in the girl with her first menstruation,

which is preceded by various changes in her body—enlarging breasts, widening hips, appearance of pubic and underarm hair. Then she has her first “period,” the first menstrual flow of “bleeding,” which may not occur again for some time. Usually a more or less regular monthly cycle is not established for a year or more, and then each girl develops her own “period.” Adult women only rarely conform to the so-called normal twenty-eight-day cycle; they vary from shorter cycles to longer, and these may be normal for their individual body builds, hormone balances, and so forth. Some girls experience a certain amount of discomfort at, or a few days before, the beginning of each menstrual period, and a few suffer intense pain, which often can be relieved or avoided by appropriate medical treatment, or sometimes by therapy of a psychological nature.

In boys there is no such dramatic sign as menstruation to indicate the coming of puberty. Boys undergo a variety of body changes, growing longer in the legs and arms, developing pubic and, later, underarm hair and, of course, down on the upper lip and chin. At puberty boys begin to have nocturnal emissions—spontaneous expulsion of seminal fluids during sleep. These occur irregularly; they may be frequent in one boy and only occasional in another boy. They often come with dreams that may be very vivid; later on they may be accompanied by dreams of close contact with females, as if the boy were rehearsing for intercourse. The dreams and emissions, especially the “sexy” dreams, are entirely involuntary and beyond the control of the boy. What is significant is that the pubertal boy may have in dreams much the same kind of experience as he would have in actual sexual intercourse. Because of this he may feel very anxious and disturbed and sometimes terribly guilty, especially if he has been brought up to believe that anything connected with sex is nasty or dirty or wicked. Quite early in adolescence the boy may have sensations of pleasurable sex functioning, which cause his interests and activities to be focused more directly upon sex than are those of the girl, who seeks masculine attention and admiration but not with the same concentrated search for sexual functioning.

The prepubertal period has been relatively short, but it has marked the dramatic departure from childhood and the awakening of boys and girls to all the complexities of adult living and of interpersonal relations. Having once crossed the pubertal threshold, the individual is never the same. Even the most carefully protected—often overprotected—boy or

girl begins at puberty to see the world differently, increasingly speculates and daydreams about what it means to be a man or a woman, what kind of relations exist between husbands and wives.

Pubertal boys and girls also find themselves, by reason of their changed bodily appearance, approached by members of the opposite sex, invited to join with older boys or girls who formerly ignored or scorned them. Thus their outward appearance of increasing maturity operates to hurry them along into the full stream of adolescent living, often before they are ready and sometimes against their own strong desires to remain children, to live and play like children, to stay under parental protection against a confusing and threatening world.

We cannot too strongly emphasize that physical growth and development, especially in puberty, create a variety of tensions, and often acute problems, for a boy or a girl. This does not mean that every boy and girl is greatly disturbed by these changes; some seem to go through the period with few, if any, upsets—at least no observable signs of worry or dismay. But we must remember that adolescents are often very skillful in concealing, especially from parents, what they think and feel. It is probably wiser to assume that every adolescent is undergoing some degree of personal uneasiness and worry about what is happening physically.

POSTPUBERTAL DEVELOPMENT, OR ADOLESCENCE

Once over the pubertal threshold, individual boys and girls move toward adult body size, form, and capacities, again at different rates of progress. The whole body undergoes a series of growth changes, which for a while may be only partially integrated. For example, a boy may have long legs and arms for several years, while his trunk—from the waist to the neck—may still be short, giving him a characteristic pre-adult figure. Likewise, different functional processes—digestion, elimination, basal metabolism, blood pressure, and so on—may change at different rates, so that for a while the adolescent body is unstable. Only slowly do most adolescents attain the so-called “steady state” of adult life. The process may be complicated by the new and increased functioning of the various endocrine glands. While there is a preponderance of male hormones in the boy

and of female hormones in the girl, each actually contains a mixture of both male and female hormones all through adult life. As these hormones are released into the adolescent bloodstream they activate all the other glands, which release their hormones. A balance may not be reached for some time; meanwhile the adolescent boy or girl may experience a variety of rapidly changing bodily conditions, of abrupt feelings of well-being or depression or unease.

During the postpubertal period the sexual functions continue to develop in the male and the female. Menstruation is only the first step in the girl's sexual maturation; ovulation, the production of an egg, which makes conception possible, may not begin until a year or two or three after menstruation has started. With the beginning of ovulation the female monthly cycle becomes organized as a recurrent process with fairly definite stages: the lining of the uterus builds up during the first twelve or fourteen days of the month; then the egg is released, and the female body prepares for its fertilization and the beginning of pregnancy. When fertilization does not occur the thick lining of the uterus ceases to grow, the hormones for pregnancy diminish, and then the lining breaks down and is discharged as menstruation. Thus each month for the next thirty or more years a woman's body undergoes a drama of preparation, expectancy, then relinquishment, if fertilization does not take place. The female body is therefore much more complicated than the male's, more subject to wide swings and alterations, as the different hormones predominate. Each girl, with her inherited body build, glandular and other capacities, works out her own individual cycle of functioning, subject to worries, stresses and strains, nutritional deficiencies, and sometimes to severe changes in weather.

During adolescence the male's sexual capacities also mature. No one knows when the adolescent boy begins to produce fertile sperms in the quantities necessary for impregnation. Probably it is a number of years after the first nocturnal emission occurs. Apparently—and here we must speak tentatively, because so little is actually known about males—each boy attains his individual cycle of recurrent accumulation in the prostate gland as he develops sperms in the testicles and stores these in the seminal vesicles. These recurrent pressures make the male more or less acutely aware of himself and sensitive to any sexual stimulus or suggestion. If this tension is not reduced by nocturnal emission, a boy may obtain release by masturbation, which to-

day is recognized as a harmless physiological activity, almost universal among unmarried males. Contrary to the ancient folklore and the lurid advertisements that prey on unsophisticated boys, masturbation does *not* stunt growth, damage the brain, or "ruin" the boy in any way. Often boys who believe these tales or have been frightened by adults may develop acute anxiety and guilt. If they try to hide their worries, withdraw from people, and brood in solitude, they may get into a state of depression and believe they are "going crazy." A quiet talk with an understanding adult who can reassure them by explaining what is happening to them will usually resolve these difficulties. Sometimes a seriously disturbed boy may in his withdrawal from the world practice masturbation, but this is not the "cause" of his trouble.

Again it should be emphasized that physical growth and sexual maturation create many different tensions in the individual, and these are not simply physical. The new functions, capacities, and sensitivities complicate the several life tasks which confront all adolescents. Growing up in our society, with the restrictions and prohibitions, the demands and the privileges of our way of life, boys and girls are often perplexed and confused in their efforts to become adults.

The suggestion of homosexual relations between adolescents is often a worry to parents. Is it considered normal for boys and for girls, before and during the pubertal stage and for a while afterward, to prefer the company of their own sex. But when they begin to develop sexually they have a kind of heightened sensitivity, especially an intense desire to touch and be touched; boys and girls quite normally walk with their arms around members of the same sex, boys usually with arms on each other's shoulders, girls with arms around each other's waists. There is often a lot of scuffling, pummeling, wrestling, a desire for bodily contact with someone who is liked and returns the liking.

DIFFERENCES IN RATES OF GROWTH AND MATURATION

Now we should recognize how individual boys and girls move through these three stages of adolescent development. Parents often worry unnecessarily about their teenagers and are distressed by what is actually their child's normal way of becoming an adult. As has been pointed out, the processes of growth and development operate very de-

pendably, but the heredity of the child determines what kind of adult organism will develop. Naturally lack of adequate nutrition, sleep, rest, and care when ill may impose heavy burdens on the growing boy or girl, but neither optimum nurture nor severe deprivations and illness apparently can greatly modify the fundamentals of growth.

While the majority of adolescents follow the general plan and timetable of adolescent development, there are many who are early and others who are late in maturing. By looking at these early and late groups we may better understand what is happening to a specific boy or girl.

EARLY-MATURING BOYS AND GIRLS

Those children who mature early appear taller than their contemporaries and at eleven or twelve years of age may seem destined to be "tall" people. However, along with his gain in height, other changes are taking place. An X ray of the skeleton may show, for example, that the epiphyses, or soft, growing tips of long bones (such as the various "joining points" in the arms and the hands, for example, at the elbows, wrists, and knuckle joints, in the thighs and legs, and at the junctures of thigh and leg bones), have begun to harden and will soon fuse. Therefore further lengthening after puberty will occur chiefly in the trunk. The downy hair on the arms and legs, which one notes in children, may become slightly coarser and darker. In a girl the nipples or the whole breasts begin to develop before those of the others in her age group. Pubic hair has begun to appear on the lower abdomen. Her hips begin to widen.

There may be comparable changes in the rapidly growing young boy—lengthening of his legs, hardening of muscles, broadening of shoulders, growth of pubic hair, and appearance of mustache or beard, with some changing of voice.

Early-maturing boys and girls, therefore, "stick out" in a group of their classmates, especially at the ages of ten, eleven, or even twelve. However, at fourteen or fifteen or sixteen only a few of these fast-maturing children will still show greater height; many of their contemporaries will have caught up with—or even exceeded—they in height as well as in sexual maturity.

Now the physiological changes in these early-maturing youngsters are no different from those that take place in every young male or female body. But when they come early

they seem more dramatic—and certainly for the child himself they are more intensely felt because they make him feel “different.” It is important for parents to help the adolescent to recognize and accept these differences and not to worry about being abnormal.

The time-span of ten years are less in which these adolescent body changes occur may seem very short when viewed in the light of the many years ahead. But these are such dramatic years that we cannot, any more than the child himself can, take an entirely long-range point of view about them. Nor can we think of them without realizing what they involve for the child’s attitude and behavior. He must develop a new image of himself and learn new relations to his parents and to his social group.

LATE-MATURING BOYS AND GIRLS

When we look at a group of fourteen-year-olds we often see a few boys and girls whom we might call slow-maturing or late-maturing, who appear to be in the prepubertal stage. We may note a boy with a baby-smooth complexion, smooth muscles, who is long-legged and long-armed, with a short trunk. He has the typical appearance of the growing boy, with a gap between bottom of trouser-leg and top of shoe, or a gap between shirt-cuff and wrist. We may see a girl with only faintly noticeable breasts, with little change in her hipline or in the childhood contours of her body.

Slow- or late-maturing boys and girls needn’t be tall and thin; they may be chubby, still fairly short in stature. Even after menstruation has started many a young girl still has only small breast development, still continues to grow, on into her college years, and only very slowly develops the pubic hair, the underarm—or axillary—hair, the regular periods of menstruation. Even a fast-growing, early-maturing boy may grow rapidly in height, develop a beard, broaden in shoulder, but may not show the more pronounced muscle tone which we consider “typically” masculine until he is in his twenties.

Among prepubertal boys who are late-maturing there are some who undergo an “early fat period”; they are often overweight and appear immature. Parents are often worried about the “fat boy” not merely because of excess weight but because the distribution of weight on his body seems feminine in its proportions. If you look at pictures of boys of various body types and different development rates, as shown in the

recent book *Somatic Development in Adolescent Boys*, by Dr. Stolz,¹ you can see what this means. The thighs and hips of these "fat boys" are heavy; there are fatty layers on breasts and abdomen, in contrast to the leanness of older boys or of earlier-maturing boys. Their chubby faces and arms haven't yet achieved the outline of bone and muscle which parents feel is masculine. The "fat boy" often has a slower pace in games or athletic activities than his thinner, taller contemporaries. Part of this slowness may be due to lack of enthusiasm for physical activities because he feels clumsy or "different." Part of it, however, may be the effect of a slower growth process, which results also in the fatness we observe. But his weight and his general disinclination for fast sports may make parents uneasy about whether he'll turn out to be a full-bodied male. Even if parents don't worry, boys during the "fat" stage may feel that they will grow up to be feminine or weak, especially when they are teased by their boy or girl friends. But according to Dr. Stolz the "fat" stage in a boy's development occurs quite frequently—in 25 per cent of the boys he studied—and has no relation to the boy's future height, weight, strength, or genital development. When the "fat boy" begins to mature the extra pounds disappear, and he may become long, thin—sometimes emaciated-looking. These dramatic alterations are astonishing not only to parents but to the boy himself, who may find it hard to recognize or accept his changed body and altered status in his group.

There are, then, vast differences in prepubertal growth-rates. Between these extremes of early and late maturing there are all shadings and variations: children who are very chubby and remain small in stature; children who develop early and yet don't become strikingly heavy or tall or large; boys who because of hereditary differences don't necessarily have a heavy beard or even a noticeable beard, and yet are pubertal boys; girls who show small breast development although they, too, have reached puberty. In these differences we see the early appearance of variations we recognize in adults of different sizes, shapes, weights, and so forth—all of whom are apparently normal.

You might say that it is "normal" for growing boys and girls in our society to worry about their normality. In *Life and Growth*, by Alice V. Keliher,² there are pictures of boys and girls on various athletic teams—swimming, running, rowing—and these pictures are typical examples of the

¹ See bibliography.

² See bibliography.

wide differences in body build of young people who are all competent in their chosen sports. Children do feel better when they can realize that it is almost impossible to choose a "typically" masculine man or a "typically" feminine woman. Size and weight, body shape, hairiness, muscularity, breast development, size of genitals, may be influenced by hereditary factors which don't interfere with the normal functioning of the male or female.

Besides, each of us is a mixture of bodily characteristics from varied groups of people; a woman with wide hips and full breast development may have a very small pelvis, while her "petite" sister may have a wide pelvis but narrow hips and small breasts. There is no absolute standard of masculinity or femininity. There may be extreme cases of glandular imbalance, where a physician may have to indicate treatment in some instances. Again, these may be due to heredity or to nutritional factors. However, in a society where we value our freedom of choice in marriage, where we encourage all nationalities to live together, it is inevitable that we will find differences in build and *discrepancies* of growth in each person—and it is important that children know that these differences are not abnormal or shameful.

DEVELOPMENT MAY MEAN STRAINS AND TENSIONS

While we consider physical maturation in children we must not forget that these profound physiological differences usually alter the interests, the feelings, the relationships of boys and girls. Since girls mature one to two years earlier than boys, their social life begins sooner to show differences of interest and kinds of activities. We should remember, too, the heavy demands that change and growth put upon the growing boy and girl; these physiological strains may make a child of either sex more susceptible to various organic ills or disturbances, more easily fatigued. Psychologically as well, boys and girls are often less stable in the prepubertal stage and just after puberty than in earlier childhood. Parents may have to give greater heed and respect to their problems—the growing pains, physical or mental, of the maturing organism—and try to provide, along with adequate nutrition, the emotional acceptance and positive support the adolescent needs from interested and helping adults.

To make this point more dramatic—and perhaps less sentimental—for parents, we might consider some statistics

that highlight what the pubertal changes may mean psychologically and physiologically in an over-all picture of health and illness. In the age group from ten to fourteen is found the lowest death rate of the whole life span. But in the age period from fifteen to nineteen years the death rate very rapidly increases. Respiratory diseases—tuberculosis, pneumonia, influenza—are among the chief causes of death; diseases of the heart are also common. Death rates from accidents are high—and though these may have no physiological cause we can't discount them, for psychological factors in the environment may contribute to this high rate of accidents. Commitments to state hospitals for mental disorders also increase in late adolescence.

Of course there are often predispositions among the children who succumb to these illnesses—perhaps long periods of poor nutrition, or a history of serious childhood illness. But with the demands of a changing and maturing body even the “normal” adolescent may have low resistance to emotional or physiological shock or to strains and infections. Moreover, at this period of life adults expect adolescents to do more—physically, intellectually, and socially, at home and in school—than previously. The entire high-school period presents a series of demands that build up to the moment when a boy or girl must be ready for a job, for college, or for extra vocational training, and there is more and more pressure on the adolescent to meet—or at least begin to meet—the requirements of the way of life he wants to follow.

Even among those adolescents who don't succumb to serious illness or infection there are many with allergies, painful menstruation, digestive upsets, acne, chronic colds or headaches, lack of appetite, constant fatigue, and so on. Some of these disorders, when chronic in adults, are often viewed as neurotic symptoms—evidence that a person is using these bodily disturbances as an escape from too heavy demands, or as an outlet for tension and worry and otherwise unexpressed feelings. These are sometimes called psychosomatic illnesses, meaning that they involve emotions and chronic feelings that are “expressed,” or located, in some organ or physiological function.

In the adolescent we might think of these disorders as both psychological and physiological, too—not necessarily neurotic, but evidence of a twofold strain on a maturing organism which has to change but which cannot recognize or fully understand or handle the resulting tensions, conflicts, uncoordinated behavior, and unexpected misbehavior.

NORMAL DEVELOPMENT MAY BE UNEVEN

As we explained earlier, the prepubertal phase leads to puberty and a period of at least some imbalance while the maturing body is again learning to function, but now as that of a young man or young woman. Some boys and girls make this transition relatively smoothly, with few or no disturbances. Others may undergo a period of physiological instability, as their different systems and bodily parts grow at different rates and only slowly reach a new level of coordinated functioning. For a time they may not be able to maintain an equilibrium inside, especially when exposed to new demands and heavier strains from the environment.

In the postpubertal period boys and girls who have grown rapidly and become tall and rangy may seem to be thoroughly disorganized. They are often clumsy, awkward, unable to perform any action skillfully or effectively. It must be remembered that these boys and girls, with their suddenly elongated arms and legs, have lost their earlier muscular coordination and skills and now must learn new patterns of action for their longer bodies, meanwhile feeling confused and embarrassed by their own clumsiness.

These boys and girls often look unfinished and out of proportion, especially when they have grown tall, for their legs and arms may become quite long while their trunks or upper bodies remain short. Gradually their trunks will lengthen as they reach the late teens or early twenties, but some may go on growing for several years in their twenties.

Even various facial features do not mature evenly. A boy's face may seem to him "all nose," "all teeth," "horsy-looking." A nose may grow faster than the rest of the face; teeth may be out of proportion to the mouth and jaws, which haven't yet reached mature proportions; the face may lengthen and seem long and thin, too big for the child's body, until other parts of the body catch up, or until growth slows down and the face gets softer contours with added weight.

Only in the late teens, at about eighteen or nineteen, does the adolescent—with a few exceptions among the early-maturing, who seem to reach stability much earlier—begin to reach a more or less stable stage of development and functioning. By that age he or she has achieved most of the adolescent growth of his or her specific type of body build; both males and females have become about what they will be as young adults, in gross measurements and in bodily proportions. But

they may still be developing, still maturing, still learning how to function as self-regulating organisms capable of performing as adults.

DEVELOPMENT DEMANDS A NEW IMAGE OF SELF

It must be emphasized that all the organs in the body, and all the varied physiological functions, have to develop and learn to operate on new levels of efficiency and of coordination to maintain the enlarged body and new functions of the young adult. Even when the individual adolescent may no longer be adding to his height or weight or enlarging his bony structure he has to go on developing what will become his adult "steady state," and the capacities for adult living.

As the body changes, the adolescent must alter his or her body image—begin to think of himself, or herself, as no longer a child but as a young man or young woman, with all that implies for his place and conduct in the family and in his age group.

Thus adolescence, in the later teens, is a period of consolidation, stabilization, integration, upon whatever level the individual boy or girl is then capable of achieving. Often there are physiological imbalances, organic dysfunctions, nutritional deficiencies from earlier years that are still unadjusted or uncorrected. These may become fixed in the adult pattern and handicap the adult's life. Sometimes the adolescent boy or girl has attempted too much too early, and by that effort and strain has weakened his or her capacity for adult living. As the reports on examination of draftees in the First and Second World Wars showed, there are many remediable defects, handicaps, and physical shortcomings in young men—and also in young women—that began early, sometime in childhood, and have persisted, often becoming worse during adolescence.

NORMAL PROCESSES CREATE INDIVIDUAL PROBLEMS

In this chapter, specifically, we hope that parents can begin to see how a natural developmental process—wholly normal and entirely self-regulating, in the sense that change occurs whether we know about glands or not—can yet impose hardships on the individual and on society which are real hardships and *real* problems. We must realize, too, that in our

efforts to be objective about what happens in sexual maturation, and about what happens in the entire growth and reproductive progress, we very often forget that, whether we can draw diagrams of their functioning or not, these *organic* processes occur in real, living persons. Factual knowledge about them does not mean that they are less important, or any less of vital concern to the boy or girl who is growing and developing. The situation is like the scene in an old and rather "corny" moving picture, in which a new mother, holding her infant in her arms for the first time, is overwhelmed with awe and admiration. A rather cynical visitor remarks, "It's not the first time a baby was born." "It's the first time *this* baby was born!" counters the indignant mother.

The problems of the growing adolescent are "first-time" problems for every person. They are no less real, no less taxing, because *we* know that every human being develops and has developed into maturity for centuries and will so develop for centuries to come. Understanding may help—and one step in helping the adolescent is to help him understand the process of his or her own growth—but this doesn't help him much unless we consider *his* own personal problems, *his* own individual growth patterns, and *his* personal life history and *his* personal concerns and worries. Anyone can show him a moving picture of the developmental cycles, but only his parents can help him accept and meet *his* problems in terms of *his* past, *his* present, and *his* future.

It does help if parents themselves and their young children know what to expect, and realize what changes will occur in the child's body before puberty. It helps a child to recognize that there are many different growth patterns and body builds, many roads to maturity, and to accept his or hers as a normal one.

It is very important that children, long before puberty, have some understanding of the processes of sexual maturation and human reproduction. But this information alone does not protect an adolescent from problems, from tensions, from fears and worries about himself. No amount of facts, diagrams, explanations to children about the functioning of "the" ovary, or "the" sperm cell, is going to help them feel ready to accept their own experiences of maturation and their own particular patterns of development. We should recognize that this factual information is important to the adolescent's understanding of self, but it is not the whole story of growing up.

STEPS AND STAGES:

THE PRE-ADOLESCENT YEARS

When we talk of the *physical* maturation of boys and girls we use the terms prepuberty, puberty, and postpuberty to classify the various body changes. But when we talk of the *behavior* of boys and girls during adolescence we cannot use the same categories. Some aspects of what is considered "adolescent" behavior—rebelliousness, moodiness, irritability—may occur before puberty, depending on the child's growth pattern. A young girl, for example, may have had her first menstruation, may behave like an adolescent, and yet may look like a prepubertal child in body contours. Or a girl may menstruate at ten and a half years, look like an adolescent, and behave like her ten-year-old contemporaries. Or so-called adolescent behavior may occur in spurts before puberty; depression, crying spells, outbursts of anger often come one to two years before the threshold phase of puberty.

Some boys and girls *do not* show "typical" adolescent depression at the onset of puberty. They may be completely happy in this new grown-upness until they face a change of demands in school or in social life. Other boys and girls do not separate in interests or "hate" each other in the new pubertal phase until they reach the middle adolescent years.

These differences depend on many factors. 1. The home and what it expects of children when they mature: does it, for example, expect girls to break suddenly with boys and become overly restricted in social life? Or are boys given more freedom and girls less? 2. The social group of adults to which the family belongs: does it expect new behavior, such as grown-up parties, dates, dancing-school? 3. The adolescent's own group: do they know one another well, or are they a new set of friends from mixed backgrounds?

For the sake of convenience, we can divide adolescent be-

havior into stages according to *the psychological steps which most children take in growing up*. We can trace the behavioral "signs" of adolescence and why they happen, and how family and peer group have their effects on these changes.

In many instances pre-adolescent behavior—its goals, values, rivalries, and kinds of activity—continues on into adolescence. For example, devotion to the parent of the opposite sex may continue until suddenly a love-relation develops with a contemporary of the opposite sex. Or pre-adolescent activities may alternate with dating or party behavior. Deep friendships with people of the same sex often continue until the beginning of college years, when they may be dropped abruptly, producing some unhappiness. Sister-brother closeness may continue into middle adolescence, and then also, with splitting of interest between siblings, depression and anxiety may set in. The individual capacities and interests of boys and girls need to be strengthened in the pre-adolescent and young adolescent periods. We must see that the quiet and docile young person, or the withdrawn though happy individual, really maintains a sense of his own competence and that the "breaks" with his old life are bridged by other friends and outside interests.

There is not, and maybe there shouldn't be, any real palliative for traumatic "breaks" of this nature because they arise from the very processes of growth. But traumas—hurts—*can lead* either to disorganization or to "good" growth, depending on the child's previous experience and his sense of individual usefulness and capacity. Almost everything worth while in life seems to be accompanied by some pain or psychological hurt. How we deal with these hurts is important—especially in the adolescent years.

THE PRE-ADOLESCENT, MALE AND FEMALE

In pre-adolescence—from ten to twelve years of age—the girl begins to realize her femininity and the boy his masculinity. The sexes definitely part ways in behavior, looking ahead to what is good and desirable for grown-up men and women. They take their cues from practically every stage of growth ahead. The girl sometimes talks like a late adolescent, acts like a mother, has fantasies of herself as a "date," a beautiful wife, and so on. The boy occasionally acts like his father, is sarcastic or hard-boiled like an older brother, or

wants to wear the sporty clothes of the fifteen-year-old. Boys have a vast array of interests—chemicals on their shelves, airplanes semi-glued, outlines of racing cars in their bureau drawers.

Both sexes are conscious of the grown-up body and of the desirability of grown-up attractiveness, male or female. A pre-adolescent may declare he is "in love" with a particular member of the opposite sex, may even consider marrying and having children.

This discovery of manhood- and womanhood-to-be is an exciting stage in the emergence from childhood and one of the most important steps in the child's definition of himself. The "signs" of this self-definition are questioning of parents, criticism of adults, and a strong feeling of "I am *me*, a girl (or a boy) about to be a woman (or a man)." There is therefore an increased sense in the child of his relations to and feelings about *each parent separately*—because separately each is reaching toward being a grown-up man or woman.

This distinctly new phase is one for which parents may be unprepared, or in which parents singly feel great alarm. It is a time when they may feel differently not only toward the child but also toward each other. Often parents' own marriage difficulties or family differences become accentuated now—because they are dealing with "little men" and "little women," reflections of themselves. It is important to understand this family system and how it relates to the child. In a later chapter we attempt to outline a few of the different ways in which the "family circuit" and the child have a mutual effect on each other.

Now we might see what the pre-adolescent is trying to do, at home and in school.

THE PRE-ADOLESCENT AT HOME

The pre-adolescent boy or girl of ten to twelve years is, in a way, "on the top rung" of childhood, for he has mastered the expectations of childhood at home and in his group. He has taken over, for example, the physical dressing and undressing of himself, takes his own baths, selects his own clothes. He can read easily, which gives his home life and school life a new dimension.

He takes trips alone, may go to camp, makes his own dates with contemporaries, goes to movies alone, likes holding conversations with older boys and girls or with adults in the

family. His manners with adults have improved; he can be taken out to dinner without causing his parents embarrassment. He recognizes the family rules; as a matter of fact he may help improve them, by asking his mother to "make schedules," for instance. He may take care of a pet. He is usually expected to, and can, take responsibility for his room and his possessions. He now feels and acts like a distinct personality, voices his personal likes and dislikes. He can give and take jokes; he no longer says, "You're teasing me," when Father makes a funny remark at the dinner table.

He is "cocky" in his self-assurance at times. At the peak of the childhood phase before puberty you may encounter irritating "sassiness." You may feel at times that there is a quality of not caring for what adults say, a kind of psychological deafness, even when the rules are observed. There are few of the bursts of tears of earlier childhood, or of early adolescence. The child won't "give in"; instead of tears, anger now may be his defense—open, righteous, and very annoying anger. Or it may be withdrawal, sullen stubbornness and defiance—"Go on, hit me, and see if I care!"

This behavior is the child's way of achieving mastery over requirements, hurts, defeats, without getting depressed or feeling helpless. He exhibits an astonishing "toughness" in facing and conquering the world. He feels capable of going on a crusade, of dealing out justice and of accepting it. He wants to be grown-up, he identifies with grown-ups, and, whether parents see it or not, he believes in rules or regulations which will order not only his own life but will help to keep others in order. We have heard pre-adolescents openly state that they need rules and control by adults. It is really astonishing to see, for example, how a boy who has a stern disciplinarian for a father accepts and tries to cope with that discipline. He takes punishments as his just due. He finds assurance in having his "badness" kept in check.

There is danger, of course, in such harsh discipline. This dependence on stern authority, this belief in his own wickedness, leaves the pre-adolescent more vulnerable to the new powerful feelings of adolescence. Respect for "strong-arm" methods, plus later disbelief in the people who were the stern disciplinarians (his parents), plus belief in his own "badness," may later result in disillusionment, in a lack of ability to love, to respect, and to give, in marriage, in jobs, in community living.

This is the period when you will find that boys and girls are trying to be as independent as possible in school and at

home. The early "runaways," the eleven-year-old boys or girls who, with five dollars in their pockets, seek adventure several miles from home, are often certain of their ability to go anywhere and do anything. Wisecracks, ironical comments, contradictions are a stock part of conversations with parents. A room, possessions, a boy's or girl's own mail, are invested with an almost sacred privacy.

There is a "hustle and bustle" about the pre-adolescent, a sense of "things to do," which is more focused than it was in his earlier childhood, when he was less organized in his activities and more dependent on adults. Children usually have more clarity and understanding, more balance than they have had before, or than they may have a little later. This is the time for parents to encourage the boy or girl to make choices and decisions so he can discover what he really likes and wants in clothes, books, amusements, and friends. Such experiences—including mistakes, when they are not too serious—will help him later to meet the teen-age pressures and demands for conformity without losing his own integrity or the capacity for following his own likes and preferences as a young adult.

Here, in this stage, are all the potentialities for work, for independence, for clear and honest thought, for fairness and tolerance, which can emerge in adult living as strengths for a democratic order.

THE PRE-ADOLESCENT OUTSIDE HOME

In school, and with club or gang, boys and girls are more active and self-directed than formerly. They focus on school work or on activities in which they excel; each wants prestige, and each seeks it where he is strongest. A skill of some kind is important, whether in music, in athletics, in sports, in crafts, or in one of the so-called academic subjects. The pre-adolescent believes in effort and wants to work for a future successful career. He likes testing his skill, and he is competitive in a "good" sense.

In this period, you will often find that a boy or girl gives up earlier interests to do the things he does best. It is a "peak" time that can contribute an amazing amount of consolidation of energy for the future. Our task as parents or teacher is *to conserve these strengths* in the child. Sometimes when a child has become a good reader we try to accent other interests—seeking for an "all-round" child. If

he concentrates on music, we get worried. If he talks baseball all the time, we encourage him in music. If he has a strong scientific interest, we ask him to be interested in baseball. But you can be fairly sure that his use of his best capacities is his way of finding prestige and of accepting himself. It is the way he is an individual.

Too often we refuse to give the child this needed support and recognition. We are afraid that his concentration on one area of achievement is bad! It is good and should be used as he wants to use it, to make him an asset to his group and for his group. It is the area in which more can be expected and demanded without damaging him. The child who writes well should be able to use his writing prowess for the family or for his class. The child who is a good musician or dancer or scholar should have opportunities to use his ability for the sake of his group and its prestige. The more informal situations the school or home can provide for the use and recognition of these individual capacities, the better. They offer the way of pulling children through to adulthood, of giving them status, of supplying confidence for work in other areas. When schools do not offer this recognition—and often they do not—parents can and should.

The pre-adolescent boy or girl is primarily oriented to the outside world and to his own society; he takes his parents and his home more or less for granted. If he is happy with his friends his life is probably more satisfying than it will be for many years to come. This is a time of beginning to know what he can do, of self-criticism, of intelligent curiosity. There is an astonishingly level-headed and clear-eyed quality about questions, observations, and reasoning, and a real growth in intellectual powers. The child feels that the future is a challenge that he can meet.

He is scornful of people who don't live up to their ideals. He wants to have a philosophy about how people should act. Often he is exceedingly irritated with behavior of younger or older sisters and brothers.

Each child in a group may show individual differences in behavior: one may be "silly," one "tough," one aggressive, one quiet. But the behavior is more self-regulatory than it was earlier; that is, each child definitely wants to be part of the group and each is aware of his own limitations. In groups with a good, fair-minded teacher or adult leader, mean and unkind tactics—bullying, scapegoating, extreme silliness—are at a new low. Such behavior irritates all the children when they want to "get on with the game." Usually when one

child is silly or aggressive his purpose is to *win* rather than to antagonize his group. If his jokes annoy adults but "hit the spot" with his gang, he'll keep right on joking. If his aggressiveness is a breezy, devil-may-care bravery which says, "I care for no one," with some back-talk to adults, then it's doubtless acceptable to his group. And a boy or girl may be quiet, too, so long as he is a good sport and loyal to his friends.

We wish parents and other adults would recognize the extreme importance of the pre-adolescent child's behavior in his group. For him rejection by the group is a major defeat. Often a wise and discreet adult can help him to see why or how his words or actions antagonize his friends. You don't try to alter him as a person, or undermine his characteristic strengths; you do drop a few *private* suggestions here and there, so that he understands that what he means to do or say may turn out wrong because of the *way* in which he does or says it. So often boys and girls grow into adulthood not realizing how their behavior affects others. This pre-adolescent phase, when the boy or girl is strong enough to be objective and self-critical, when *one of his major goals is to be part of the group*, is the most rewarding time for offering "helpful hints."

When a girl or boy comes home declaring, "No one likes me," or, "Everybody picks on me," or, "They're all stinkers," a parent is sympathetic—and rightly so. But the parents may also tend to reinforce the child's disbelief in his group of friends; or to restate their own demands for conformity, for proper home behavior and excellent grades, with the added remark that what his friends think of him doesn't count. The typical "spoiled," objectionable adult is usually not the person who was given plenty of admiration as a child, but often the one who was praised because, first, he did only what his mother and father wanted, and, second, with their approval he affected a "sour-grapes" attitude to the friendship and the demands of his group. The feeling of being picked on is very usual and normal in the late pre-adolescent phase, and in early adolescence too. A boy or girl may say, "Everyone talks about me," "Everyone looks at me," "Everyone is mean." Overprotection (or no help and understanding) may intensify this feeling because it deprives the young person of the chance to find out that he can work through situations and discover he is *not* picked on or unloved, and also that getting along with people requires effort on his part.

The "peak" period of pre-adolescence is an altruistic phase

in which boys and girls *want to give to and for others*. In giving only to parents in yielding only to what parents ask, they are really being deprived of the "giving" spirit and getting in return the kind of parental attention and protection a little child requires. This isn't fair to them—to say nothing of the wives and husbands they will someday marry. True, the picked-on member of a group may need to be protected, but he also needs to be told privately and discreetly why his acts elicit disapproval and dislike. The feeling of being disliked by others is not a good feeling for a child to carry into adulthood. As he grows into maturity such a child will find many ways to account for his misery. He will blame his wife, his children, his neighbors, his past, or his society. If as a child he is really a scapegoat, then we must do two things: (a) try to find out whether this dislike really exists and express a candid opinion about it, that it is "not good" or "fair"; (b) try to help the child see how his behavior provokes the dislike. It is never wise for parents to depreciate the child's contemporaries.

It seems to us that the democratic process can feed on and grow by the great and positive strengths of the pre-adolescent period of life. Unwittingly we sometimes aid and abet the underdog feeling (or the feeling of superiority), forgetting that this is the most favorable time for helping children to know that they can manage their own behavior.

BEGINNINGS OF "CRUSHES"

To the pre-adolescent, loyalty, kindness, generosity, friendliness are very important. The idea of love, of devoting oneself completely to a loved person or to an ideal, becomes a cherished value. He has a fervor in his love for others equaled only by his intense desire to be a person himself. A teacher or librarian, an older sister or brother, a church organist, an older boy or girl outside the family, a person who is usually of the same sex as the child, becomes the focus of this love and admiration. These "crushes" that occur throughout adolescence are a way in which a boy or girl looks to a guiding star, a vision of what is desirable and grown-up.

A pre-adolescent girl often "adores" wholeheartedly an older pretty girl; a boy, a friendly and competent older male. Wanting to own something the older one has—and stealing

it—is not at all uncommon. This kind of petty theft should be seen as a desire to “be” the other person, to be part of him or her, and not as a criminal act. Many times pre-adolescent girls and boys are crushed with embarrassment and guilt when the “loved one” is scornful or punishing about such thefts. The older boy or girl is usually embarrassed or irritated because he or she, unlike the pre-adolescent “adorer,” thinks in terms of sexual behavior, and a few pointers about the nature of this crush may alleviate the scornful attitude.

In the pre-adolescent and early adolescent phase these crushes seem to symbolize for the girl what is feminine, lovely, gentle, poised. In the boy the crush is often admiration for strength and masculine self-assurance. In later adolescence young men and women turn their devotion more toward people whose ideas, writings, talents, or work they admire and wish to emulate.

ROMANTIC LOVE

At eleven or twelve, after three or four years of disinterest in the opposite sex—if not active dislike—boys and girls begin to realize the importance of the two sexes. There is so much excitement about this discovery that the parent begins to wonder how on earth his child will ever survive the long years of adolescence.

Dreams of romantic love seem to flower, especially with the girls. If you listen to an eleven-year-old girl telling the story of a recent movie, you’ll see that there is very little realization of what is sexual in an adult sense. The “love” story, who “gets” whom in the end, who might have been a better choice, how “she” dressed—these are the interesting things, but it is all still only a fantasy.

Kissing games often start before puberty—usually before you expect them. Though the “facts of life” are still only objective facts related to the future, the boy or girl suddenly realizes that these facts concern grown-up sexual activity and becomes more curious about them. Notes are compared and jokes exchanged.

The pre-adolescent’s behavior at this period of development is open and outspoken. He is not yet “on guard” against his own sexual feelings, for the personal, private aspects of those feelings are still to come. He doesn’t realize

the implications of a kiss or a dirty joke. He knows that love, mating, marriage, and having babies are the most important goals, but they seem easy and clear-cut. Also they seem highly desirable, and these ideals become channels for his altruism, reasons for acting grown-up, promises of a very exciting life indeed.

Kissing games disappear in a short time, and so do the rough jokes of pre-adolescence and early adolescence. The real development of a boy's or girl's capacity for adult living lies not in parties or in kissing games but in the attitude we give him about everything else he does. His hobbies, clubs, and trips, his continuing *positive* behavior in his group of friends, his ways of finding recognition, are what count for future years. As parents, we need to be aware of all these ways in which pre-adolescents are developing, ways that will establish sound bases for their knowledge of themselves and of other people.

PARENTS' ATTITUDES

The start of kissing games and "raw" jokes often evokes parental attitudes that affect the pre-adolescent's whole image of himself, that suddenly thrust upon him a guilt or shame that makes him unable to work wholeheartedly. This is just the time for parents to hold on, sit back, think, and talk with teachers, other parents, and guidance people. It is a time to think ahead—about the trust you must show in your adolescent-to-be and his friends, about a renewed effort to say things positively to youngsters who feel grown-up, idealistic, altruistic. Good parents and wise parents have to be *groups* of parents today, who try to understand children other than their own. Many parents of girls feel that there are no trustworthy young boys around, and boys' parents suspect the "grasping" females. You cannot, alone, offer your child faith in society, nor can your neighbor alone offer it to his child. As adults, you are both "society" for each other's children.

The best way to believe in your own child is to know other children in his school or in any group to which he belongs. Every adolescent since time began needed the adult world to talk with him and to trust him. Parents have to create this "society" with their adolescents *and other adolescents*, and the school is a good place—maybe the only place—for such a friendly adolescent-adult meeting ground.

PRE-ADOLESCENT RIVALRY WITH PARENTS

The crushes on people outside home are usually, as we noted, directed to older people of the same sex as the child. Children are no longer mere children; they are aiming toward grown-up masculinity or femininity, but without any realization, as yet, of what this involves. *These crushes are not indications of a preoccupation with sexual urges, which will come with puberty and will be an actual threat to the boy or girl.* This is an especially important point for parents to realize, because often *the child's attitude to each of his parents* is different in this phase.

This pre-adolescent identification with a grown-up man (or woman in the case of a girl) is part of a goal the child holds for the future. He is concerned with a role—a pattern to follow, a picture of grown-up behavior, responsibilities, and strength to copy. The attitude to the parent of the same sex—to her mother for the girl, to his father for the boy—often involves a great deal of woman-to-woman or man-to-man rivalry, and we mean a rivalry in its true sense, with jealousy, competition, and a real desire to “be better than” the parent of the same sex.

The parent of the opposite sex also assumes a new importance in this period. The girl, being feminine, seeks the admiration of her father; the boy, keenly aware of his masculinity, strives for his mother's approval and acceptance. You find very often that a girl is deeply hurt by her father's blame or distrust; the boy, too, may feel powerless under his mother's punishments or censorious words.

At this age, when children are trying to accept their separate roles, you find a special need for the help and attention of the parent who represents the grown-up version of the opposite sex. Because children are so close to their parents, they depend upon those parents to help them find out whether they are acceptable as masculine or feminine persons.

THE PRE-ADOLESCENT GIRL

FRIENDSHIPS

The girl, before puberty, gradually absorbs into her own behavior the ideals of femininity which she sees as desirable. These concern wifeness and motherhood, love and devotion to an “ideal” man, the cherishing and protecting of babies,

plus a picture of herself as beautiful, good, kind, generous, and so on. So she tries to emulate everything grown-up: she becomes concerned about beauty, admires the "princess type" of clothing. She may want her hair long; she wants frills and spangles on her clothes, velvet on her best coat, satin—if she can get it—for her best dress.

The pre-adolescent girl aspires to be a beautiful princess (a modern one), a kind and wise mother, and all that is called for in sophistication, grace, and poise. She wants to feel grown-up about romantic love and motherhood. She has an insatiable curiosity about her older sister's love interests. She wants all the details of her mother's and father's courtship. She wants to know about pregnancy, about bodies, about how this or that "feels." She adores "love-songs," pictures of beautiful women; she draws these beautiful women to the point where her parents are exasperated.

Not yet adolescent, she often seems to her parents precocious about sex; her unabashed preoccupation with her own femininity might easily give you the impression of too advanced sexual awareness. But remember that when the true sexual impulses or feelings come along they will not be expressed so openly, or in terms of ideals for grown-upness. Then behavior will be far more awkward, unorganized, and unsure. Girls will drop back to the *present*, to their real selves, and worry about what is here and now in their bodies, and they will become deeply concerned about what "the men" think.

The pre-adolescent girl, in buttressing her personality, has close friendships with one girl or more. Often they are friendships of "opposites"—of two entirely different temperaments, backgrounds, interests. What the friends find in each other is what adults find in their friendships: one may have stability, the other may be volatile; one may be "sassy," the other restrained; one may seem sweetly angelic, the other boisterous. What lies in friendships we don't know. We have to remember that most often they are stabilizing, strengthening, protective relationships, and that according to many, many case histories young girls have been deeply hurt when these friendships have been attacked as "bad." Friendships need room to grow, or to die of their own accord. Frequently we seek friends who will help us to be the kind of people we would like to be at that time in our lives—but we change our ideal selves and so may outgrow friendships.

In most pre-adolescent friendships we can see girls finding release from pressures, demands, rivalry at home or in the larger peer group. An older pubertal girl may find that a younger friend is less threatening than her agemates. A pre-adolescent girl with high, almost adult standards finds indirect expression for what she cannot be in a friend who is gay, silly, or bold with adults. Friendships of this kind are extremely common, and they, too, are an important part of the behavior pattern. To undermine them is to take away protection, and even when such friendships dissolve of their own accord with the coming of early adolescence, the loss seems to produce hurt and confusion in the girl.

Pre-adolescent friendships are a means of growth, especially friendships with people of the same sex. Like hobbies, collections, interests, they *reinforce* the child's personality strengths for being masculine or feminine. It is important to encourage friendships of girls in this phase because they express deeper, more continuous needs and strengths of the personality than do some of the later adolescent friendships and popularity patterns.

We emphasize this point because parents often misinterpret such friendships as the beginning of sexual interests or the breakdown of values. They are quite the opposite: they are an avenue of strength through which the female is learning self-direction. While self-control may seem enough now, it will not be nearly enough later on. *Self-direction* (the positive word) means retaining one's own individual power *to do things*, to choose to believe in what one wants as a woman, and what one doesn't want or cannot tolerate from other people.

ACTIVITIES

Although many people decry the way pre-adolescent girls act or dress like boys, play boys' games, use tomboy language, this behavior means for many girls an application of the values of sportsmanship, loyalty, and fairness *on their level*, and consequently a rejection of the "undercover" methods used among some young females. Many pre-adolescent or early-adolescent girls prefer to play with boys and avoid the "mean" tactics or sarcasm of their own sex. In an age when popularity patterns and the rivalries they involve become pressing even at twelve, many girls hold out against them and continue or intensify their sports or games with boys.

Very often, when the social pattern of a community stresses nylon stockings, formal dances, and other semi-adult mannerisms for young adolescents, many girls would rather enjoy the companionship of males.

THE GIRL AND HER FAMILY

The deep-rooted femininity of the girl, her desire to have and protect her own, seems to make itself evident quite early in her relations to her mother. The protective love which will someday be turned toward her own husband and children (and which in fantasy turns in that direction at prepuberty) gives her the aspect of a woman and seems to produce, almost invariably, a clash with her mother. The girl wants protection as a child and at the same time emotional independence as a female, which, we must admit, puts her mother in a difficult spot.

In mother-daughter conflicts, even from early childhood days, the little girl at times displays a quiet or overt, almost smug, stubbornness which irritates the mother. The little girl thinks, or talks about, what she is going to do with "her" babies, "her" home. It is as if she feels a great power and integrity in possessing femaleness.

In pre-adolescence then, the girl is a child-woman. She is amazingly perceptive and objective about her mother's personality. She knows her mother's faults and failings, as a woman, and she is sometimes quite open in telling her mother about them. She knows the special kind of behavior that will get her father's admiration, and uses it. Yet, despite such perspicacity, the girl is extremely dependent on her mother as a mother, and on her mother's complete love, past and present.

We know a story that illustrates the way a pre-adolescent girl can idealize her mother while seeing, in almost devastating fashion, her mother's faults. An eleven-year-old girl was asked to write a school composition about someone she knew who exemplified kindness and generosity as opposed to selfishness. Later her mother was given the composition to read. It began, "My mother, who is just an ordinary housewife . . ." The mother was amazed and pleased at the virtues attributed to her. She laughed and said, "Why, Frances, I don't recognize myself." And the girl answered, "Well, if I told them what you were really like, you wouldn't be so pleased."

Obviously the girl admired her mother deeply—and wanted

the world to admire her—but at the same time she saw just where her mother fell short of the ideal. For many years we have talked about the pre-adolescent period as the “gang stage”—meaning that the child’s gang has assumed great importance, and that parents are no longer on a pedestal in the child’s eyes. Yet, while the child recognizes his parents’ faults, the development of love in him seems to make him need more than ever the unconditional love of his parents.

The girl seems, then, to be in an “Alice-in-Wonderland” stage, at times very big and then very little. She needs her mother, and yet she is often downright antagonistic. She is also extremely dependent on what her mother says about her, for she sees her mother as a powerful person. At times she feels that by herself she is nothing, that what her parents say or feel about her are the only true criteria of her goodness.

So you will find that often after a battle with her mother the pre-adolescent girl becomes overly affectionate, overly contrite, feeling perhaps that she has got herself “out on a limb” and must reassure her mother of her own love. Also, the girl often wants open evidence of affection from her mother; she wants to go places alone with her; she wants a demonstrative hug; she wants a story about herself as a little girl; she wants to be tucked in bed with loving words.

This back-and-forth, up-and-down behavior of the pre-adolescent girl is trying. The mother often becomes afraid of her child, begins to worry about her own faults or shortcomings. Often the girl talks about what “so-and-so’s” mother does—sews pretty clothes or bakes fancy desserts, or is “prettier,” or gives better parties—and this is no help for mother at all.

Usually neither child nor parent is fully conscious of the mother-daughter conflict. The mother can’t quite put her finger on the trouble, and the daughter is completely unaware of any rivalry with her parents. Modern mothers are often frightened by what seems like a rejection, and hurt by their daughters’ criticisms. Many mothers think that this hidden conflict occurs only in their individual homes, not realizing that it happens in many families.

Mothers have to realize that the way they meet this conflict may have a long-lasting effect on their daughters. Girls are at this age forming feelings and judgments about themselves as future women—not just as obedient children. The punishing or shaming words, the criticisms or exasperation or anxiety of a mother, give the young girl a picture of her-

self that may persist into adult life. The powerful weight of a mother's judgments will hit the girl very hard in adolescence and may deprive her of the integrity she needs to feel that her own judgments are right and good.

Mothers need to state demands and expectations without making their daughters feel useless or wicked or faithless. Occasional dislike or even hate for her mother in a daughter is quite usual; mother's status as the family center automatically earns some envy from the daughter. Mothers need to take the broad view, to understand that these feelings are not new in the annals of femininity, nor vicious, nor lasting. And the mother who tries harder and harder to please her daughter is only setting up a model of perfection more difficult to fight against.

The mother who understands that she is powerful in her daughter's eyes simply because she has a home of her own, a husband and children, can show anger or make demands or listen to her daughter without feeling threatened. The modern mother, who has gone "all out" to make her children happy, especially needs to realize that human beings don't stop having "good" and "bad" feelings just because they've had a happy or an easy childhood. We don't grow up in a twilight state of tranquillity—that, really, is not living or maturing.

Mothers must like themselves as women—and they need not ask that their daughters always exactly resemble them. A mother must give her daughter the feeling that, as a mother, she is steadfast and stable, that she is not thrusting herself into the girl's life, but is always there as a source of strength to help her daughter grow up.

A mother should *honestly* help the girl "for her own good," give her a chance to protest, and protest herself when necessary, without fearing that she'll lose her daughter's love. Suggestions to a daughter about behavior toward others, about consideration for others in the family, including the mother herself, may elicit occasional back-talk and rebellion, but these suggestions are often necessary to help the child to keep her own "good" picture of herself and also to make her feel that she has some justification in being angry.

The pre-adolescent girl often does things just to make her mother "mad," to shake the grown-up world a bit and make it come down to her level. Sometimes she seems to be trying to get her mother to show that the grown-up woman, too, is vulnerable, and not so "all-right" or "all-good" as she seems—that she can be hurt. This is almost a form of communica-

tion, as if the child were to say, "If you can be angry with me and get over it, then my anger is not so wrong. I needn't fear you or your displeasure or your power."

The pre-adolescent girl is not only a true individual but a true female. That is what mothers must remember: the child is emerging into femininity with all that this involves in terms of fantasies, mixed feelings, and the need to make herself known in the family as a person with those feelings.

A mother's power and strength are resources to be drawn upon by her daughter in growing up. They needn't become lasting challenges or eternal proofs of a mother's natural superiority. Mothers are always superior because they are mothers—because they give their children and their daughters everything they have. As women, though, they need to admit that their daughters can be better—and should be better and wiser in some fields. Girls not only should be *permitted* personality strengths of their own, but should be *expected* to have those strengths and to develop them in the family.

In this period before adolescence the girl's father plays an important role. However, we discuss the *circular family process* in a later chapter—the father-mother-child relationship. There are many combinations of parental attitudes which affect the girl, and it is very seldom only her relationship to her mother that affects her development through adolescence.

THE PRE-ADOLESCENT BOY AND HIS FAMILY

"His battle for power by day and his abdication at night,"¹ is the best description we know of the young boy's search for masculinity and his dependence on his parents for closeness and protection. While the girl looks to a future as a wife and mother, the pre-adolescent boy sees masculinity as skill, prowess, strength. To him being tough, brave, loyal, courageous, is the traditional ideal of a male.

From the time he is little a boy is expected to defend himself by his fists and muscles. A toy gun in a holster is a defense against threats that might come his way. His fantasy wish is to be powerful enough to "beat" anything. This masculine "defense" role seems to make little boys more conscious of physical threats than are girls. A ten-year-old

¹ *National Velvet* by Enid Bagnold.

girl is not nearly so afraid of taking a trip alone as is a boy of the same age. He sees danger to himself where she doesn't.

To the outside world the boy seems tough and aggressive, "spoiling for a fight." Actually most boys are fearful and depend a great deal on a father's or mother's word to assure them of their strength to meet the world.

At the peak of the pre-adolescent phase most boys, no matter what size or shape, try hard to be strong and tough. For some of them emotional memories of past experiences or present pressure from family members may make this toughness continually anxious and tense. A boy may talk about or show fears only to his father and mother.

Looking at a boy's parents, you'll find that they are often in conflict about him themselves. Mother says he needs sympathy and understanding—and she is right! Father says he has to meet physical threats head-on, to face situations when he feels defeated or afraid—and he, too, is right. There are both a masculine and a feminine point of view about every situation, and both are valid where children are concerned. The mother has been her boy's protector and knows from intuition and long experience his need for continual reassurance. The father knows from *his* long experience the sense of mastery and strength a man achieves by overcoming fear and facing up to a difficulty.

The boy needs both these points of view and an expression of them. He has a tremendous admiration for and belief in his father, as well as some fear of his father's power, and he wants to show that he is masculine. At the same time the boy loves his mother and needs *her* love and admiration as a young male.

A father, therefore, may get "tougher" with a boy who seems fearful, and a mother may become more protective—each parent believing he is right and the other wrong. Or the mother may see the boy's anxiety and think it is unusual; then she may force him into toughening experiences before he is ready for them.

A pre-adolescent boy who is really competent may feel that he is not masculine because he is "scared." Demands which come from the father, whom the boy admires, often create a breach between father and son: the boy is afraid of his imagined incompetence; the father assumes that his son "isn't trying." Quite frequently, when a boy is anxious about whether he can meet his father's high standards, he does *not* try. He would rather seem uncaring or lazy to his father than incompetent.

In general, however, the young boy's drive is toward developing his own competence and being admired for "mind-ing his own business." In these times of prolonged education for young people there is little opportunity for a boy to seek adventure on his own, or even to develop outside home a skill or interest which is different from his father's. So the main disagreements with his father's way of doing things—the show of strength to his father—are by way of verbal battles or in an attitude of not-caring.

Unfortunately the father often feels these are danger signs of impudence and aggressiveness in his son. We have to remember that as the boy approaches adolescence he is unable to "take out" or show his feelings in his social group. He loses prestige when he shows fear—and outright disagreement with his gang may earn rejection for him. So, more and more, his only method of finding his individuality is to make it seen and felt in his family. Furthermore, he wants his parents to know he is not a child any longer; he must let them see what he thinks and feels.

A father, then, must recognize the power of his position vis-à-vis the pre-adolescent son and try not to make that power defeating to him. Many case histories of adolescent boys show the life-long struggle in the person to demonstrate his worth to his father—and often this continues after the father is no longer present.

A mother's standards, of course, can be as powerful for the boy as a father's, or even more so. A mother's love and admiration continue to be deeply needed, and her boy is often afraid that growing up as a male may mean that he has to abandon her affection. Or he may fear that she won't love him *if he is different from his father*. If she likes and values one kind of man (and after all that is why she married his father) then by hook or by crook he's determined to be that kind of man himself. Incidentally, this three-way process operates for the girl, too, which is why she *is* at times her mother's rival.

The boy tries to hold his mother's admiration. Whatever kind of masculinity or achievement she demands in exchange for approval he will try to demonstrate. (The greatest and most astonishing achievement of young men is their ability, somewhere along the line, to find lovable sweethearts and wives!) A boy's mother is tremendously powerful in his life, for she is the life-giver and the beginning of all good things. Her son needs her just as males have always needed the love of females to give them purpose in living.

We are likely to assume that the pre-adolescent boy is really independent of the other sex in finding masculinity, just because he is not interested in girls of his own age. In our opinion, at this "independent" age he is more dependent on his mother's love than he has ever been. Again we ask mothers *to be mothers, to take a position as mothers*, to give, to be sympathetic, to ask of the boy what he can do and not merely give admiration for what is pleasing to them. We ask mothers not to be afraid to be angry occasionally—and to be strong enough to take their sons' criticisms or disagreements.

Mothers have to accept their own hurt feelings when their boys are rebellious, critical, fault-finding. The years of parenthood are the toughest growing-up years in terms of what adults still have to learn about love. A boy's love for his parents and their love for him become part of his understanding of others and of his whole attitude to life.

STEPS AND STAGES: ADOLESCENCE

THE TRANSITION

For pre-adolescent boys and girls, then, the world is a mixture of dream and reality: they are inventors and heroes, actresses and beauty queens. But they are still children, needing the protections of childhood, no matter how independent they seem.

As they advance into adolescence there comes a new and enlarged awareness, as if they were discovering themselves and others for the first time. This is tremendously exciting for boys and girls; they see a whole new world inviting them but not yet threatening them as it may a little later on.

Eleven- and twelve-year-olds show this kind of excitement even though they retain most of their pre-adolescent interests and allegiances. They have little awareness of the adult meaning of their behavior or of adult conventions. Girls, whose maturation advances more rapidly than that of boys, may seem "brazen" as they invite attention, while boys may act like tough movie characters, rude and disdainful to the girls, but showing a lively interest in female anatomy. This transitional stage is brief and very normal; often a group of eleven- or twelve-year-olds shows this exuberance for a year or so, and then quiets down again. This may alarm parents unless they understand that neither the feelings nor the capacities of sexual maturation have wholly arrived.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ADOLESCENCE

When the exuberant behavior at the peak of pre-adolescence quiets down—usually about the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth year—girls become more reserved, and boys often take refuge in their own masculine interests.

Some different characteristics now appear: unsureness, lack of organization, often an apparent loss of verve which contrasts sharply with pre-adolescent bounce.

We might review some of the reasons for this "shake-up" that produces unorganized, uneven behavior in the young adolescent:

1. First, sexual maturation brings physical disturbances, with feelings and impulses which, in the child's mind and fantasies, separate him from his parents and very often from all adults. So he becomes guarded and secretive.

2. He sees the reasons behind conventional behavior and is unsure of how much of his secret thoughts he reveals in his own behavior. So he is offended by allusions to his bodily growth, resentful if some behavior is criticized or pointed out as undesirable.

3. He sees that his childhood closeness to his parents can contribute nothing to his own adjustment to the opposite sex, and this awareness leads to uneven relations with his parents. Sometimes he holds them at arm's length; at other times he cannot maintain that distance. A girl or a boy may become deeply depressed at the beginning of adolescence as he faces the loss of "child-love" for his parents. Sometimes, with today's long adolescent period, this depression doesn't come in full force until the young man or woman has to take a job or go away from home.

4. He finds that the achievements of pre-adolescence may not be enough to win the admiration of the opposite sex.

5. He wants that admiration, and yet he has to erect barriers for his speech and action. He must set these barriers *as well as* show positive behavior to attract the girls or the boys.

These new realizations and self-imposed limits often make him feel lonely and disorganized, as if his world were falling apart. He must revise his image of himself, and concurrently he meets again the old feelings of unsureness or helplessness.

Unsureness permeates his work, too. The adult world is frightening in its high standards and demands. All past expectations, admonitions, or threats come back to haunt him, as if they should now be applied to these new feelings.

THE ADOLESCENT AND ADULTS

In the early adolescent period many boys and girls become antagonistic to adult authority. To them the adult world seems to be excessively and often unfairly demanding, and

less protective than it has ever been. They think that even their own parents are totally unaware of their deep feelings and oblivious to their desire for privacy. Their antagonism is somewhat akin to the six-year-old's defiance of adults when he realizes the new burden of what is expected of him when he enters school for the first time. The young adolescent is making his entrance into the grown-up world, where adults set the norms of grown-upness. He is secretive, watchful, suspicious of grown-up motives.

One boy in his first high-school year was asked to fill out a questionnaire containing several unfinished sentences for completion. One read: "My mother is . . ." The boy said later, "I put 'My mother is *at home*.' They're not going to catch me on that kind of stuff." To be "caught," to reveal himself, his background, or his secret feelings to other adults is devastating for the young adolescent. Since he does not know the "secret past" of many of his friends, since they or their families seem to him "all-round normal," he does not want to appear different or of lesser stature. He feels his own differences as an individual, and those of his family, and he has little judgment about them except that they *are* different, and therefore undesirable. He wants to belong to the "all-round normal" family, too. In our shifting, heterogeneous communities it is not at all unusual for a young adolescent to be ashamed of his home, his parents' backgrounds, the family's style of living, its financial worries. So he puts up a front, not only for himself, but for his family.

The implied "disloyalty" to his family brings confusion and guilt and adds to his sense of loneliness. But this embarrassment about parents and families is so usual in the early adolescent period that it should be accepted without alarm. As the adolescent finds friends and gets to know their families, this attitude changes and he begins to "find" his family again and to like or at least tolerate it.

In general, the young adolescent gives the appearance of being self-centered. He is wholly taken up with his own life, with its defeats or its gains. He is worried less about trouble or tragedy in parents' lives than about what effect it may have on him, his friendships, his ability to "keep up" with the crowd.

The nicest picture we know of this absorption in self is that developed in the story by Carson McCullers, *Member of the Wedding*. A pre-adolescent girl is absorbed in the troubles and joys of the adults around her. Her playmate is a little boy (she shrieks taunts at children her own age who

are set apart from childhood by their dress and friendships). She wants to accompany her older brother on his wedding trip and cannot understand why she is not allowed to. A little later, however, she joins her contemporaries as an adolescent, interested in her own life, unaware now of the sorrows in the lives of the people she had been close to.

This self-absorption is not selfishness essentially. Rather it is a discovery of a new part of life—one's own special place in life, one's own human relationships, separate from those of childhood, different from those of adults. It means, basically, that the child has to separate dreams about himself from the real person he is.

However, adults in the social group may actually promote or reinforce this self-centeredness by accent on clothes and popularity. Actually the adolescent needs opportunities for finding success and satisfaction in his work so that he need not continue to be preoccupied with himself.

EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS ACCOMPANY MATURATION

Before puberty and at puberty, along with the boy's or girl's body changes, there arises what we might call a "flooding" of feelings and impulses. They are not just sexual. They are indescribable longings and yearnings and fleeting depressions. The important thing to remember is that these feelings are *entirely new*, and the strength of their onrush may be disturbing and threatening to the young adolescent. Also, as his body develops he senses in a new, self-conscious way that what is happening to him is the preparation for mating and adult sexual living. (A year earlier kissing games were exciting, but not threatening.)

Many parents who have given their children sex information and a positive attitude toward their bodies may not understand that such a realization is a kind of shock for the adolescent. But you can never wholly prepare people for emotional experiences. We may be steeled against the time when our children grow up and go away, and yet it is always an emotional hurt. We may think we are ready to accept the death of an aged parent, but when it occurs it is more painful than we expected.

New body maturation may be a shock to boys and girls because the idea of sexual intercourse, especially when they are not yet in love, seems to shatter the feeling of privacy

they have built up. It is not at all unusual for a boy or a girl to become extra modest about bathing and dressing. They are often acutely embarrassed—far into adolescence—by physical examinations, questions about their body parts.

The young adolescent may also entertain fantasies which are a combination of what he has heard, what he fears, and what he hopes for. A young girl may have fantasies and fears about pregnancy, for example, regardless of the fact that she has had little contact with boys. Or an uncle's or father's caresses may suddenly take on connotations that are repugnant. Folklore of childhood, misinterpretations of past information, daydreams may add up to fantasies that worry the adolescent and add to his defenses against the adult world.

In this new, confused emotional state demands at home or school require an effort from the boy or girl which is out of all proportion to the actual requirements. Feelings seem to get in the way of action. What the young adolescent must do is separate his own nameless fears and fantasies from his objective task in the outer world. What does this mean in terms of his work? He is no longer as "free" to approach tasks wholeheartedly. He cannot evaluate himself or his work easily. He depends upon, and looks for, some objective goals, some measurements and techniques, which will be his guides for what to do and how to do it.

In his anxiety about himself he may not want to try anything, for fear he won't succeed. When the tasks are limited to a few academic subjects, or are rated by "comparisons" of one boy or girl with another, his worry may be increased if he cannot meet those standards. The needed prestige, the outside assurance that he *can* do good work, may be withdrawn, making him feel incompetent. If, on the other hand, there are no requirements or guides at all, he is thrown back upon himself and his own feelings, which offer only confusion and despair.

The young adolescent's dilemma, therefore, gives us some indication of the kind of education needed at this point: an education that does not leave him isolated in his own confusion, that does not uncover or probe into his helpless feelings or arouse feelings of incompetence. Especially from, let us say, the ages of eleven to fifteen (to include differing rates of maturation), education should offer every means of creative art, science, dance, dramatics, *with some techniques as guides*. Some requirements for individual boys and girls should be stated, yet confidence should not be destroyed by the age-old tactics of shaming or belittling or undue criticism.

A PERIOD OF DEFENSES

At this time when he is so vulnerable the youth starts to reinforce and strengthen his own personality. In early adolescence this reinforcement might almost be called a "disguise" for feeling. His sensitiveness is best described as "thin-skinned." To cover up the fluctuating helplessness, rage, despair, wishes, daydreams, he puts on a new protective coating. In some ways this is literally true: the young girl concentrates on clothes or lipstick, fusses with her hair, her nails, her purse. The boy often takes opposite tactics—letting his hair grow, refusing to take baths, wearing dirty or torn clothing.

The coating is a reflection of peer-group standards: adopting what seems right and proper with his agemates is the young adolescent's protection against feeling inferior and alone. He tries to be part of the group by being like the other members. He uses standard phrases, jokes, ways of teasing or bantering. When he tells stories about his family, they are carefully trimmed so as to include only the humorous or "acceptable" elements. When he repeats an incident about himself, it is always shorn of his deep personal feelings.

Parents so often misunderstand this very necessary protective device of the young adolescent. They should know that *he is actually trying to keep his balance, to find the basis for getting along with other boys and girls and adults without feeling open to emotional hurt.*

THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT RESHAPES HIS SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

Physically the young adolescent is on the threshold of maturity. Psychologically, too, he is on a new threshold; he is looking at himself as he is, not as the dream person of his childhood imaginings.

He now realizes that his own conscience is the arbiter of what he does. As a growing child he may have been aggressive, boisterous, careless; he may have broken the rules. But he *knew* that he was protected by adult society, which does not control children with complete rigidity, or at least does not jail them for childish acts.

Very often, then, at the beginning of adolescence, a boy or girl may be afraid of himself and what he may do. He is ashamed of thoughts that may lead to damaging action. He

may feel intensely guilty about behavior—past as well as present. Because he is facing a new period of life the past, when he was considered “good” or “bad,” careless or capable, has extra weight. He pulls away from it and he tries with new vigor to find situations that give him status and approval. At times he becomes frightened and helpless, and he may show his feelings, especially at home, in fits of uncontrolled anger or depression.

To sum up what happens at this period, there are two aspects of development which have to be considered: 1. the adolescent's own body changes, inside and outside, which produce tension, depression, unsureness; 2. a *conscious looking at the self, evaluation of the self*, assessment of the self in terms of what has happened in the past.

THE ADOPTED CHILD

In the case of the adopted child you can see more clearly the conflict which may occur when the boy or girl reaches this new threshold and consciously takes stock of the kind of person he is.

First, like all adolescents, he has to accept his maturing body and all that it promises or demands of a man or woman. But, second, he surveys his picture of himself in terms of who he is (and has been) in his family.

Sex information, as we have said, has a different meaning at each stage of development. Any information, for that matter, has a different meaning as we gain experience emotionally, intellectually, physically. The facts of life for the adopted child, therefore, may mean something new in adolescence. A child who is adopted may enjoy his “specialness” when he is three or four—how nice to have been picked out and cared for by such nice parents! At six or seven, with new school demands, new friends, he may go through a troublesome period with adults. (“I don’t belong to you.” “You can’t make me.” “I wonder if they really love me.” “Why didn’t my parents want me?”—and so on.) Spoken or unspoken feelings may accompany this new phase of activity in school with new adults, new social situations away from home.

Again in early adolescence the question “Who am I?” may be intensified with the boy’s or girl’s new realization that he has to stand on his own worth. What kind of person is he, anyhow? Is he really unlovable? What kind of persons were

his parents? Will he be like them? (Often a "real" child, biologically speaking, is worried about whether he possesses some of parents' weaknesses or faults.) The adopted adolescent may be particularly "touchy" about demands and rules, may be aggrieved by deprivations, feel that they spell out rejection, that he is especially picked on. He may expect to be rejected by adults and may assume a sulky or defiant attitude to them.

Mother-daughter or father-son antagonism, which is usual before puberty, and in adolescence, too, may also be intensified in the family of the adopted child. He may look for and find injustices in the way he is treated. Just as in the "normal" family, however, the adopted child may have great difficulty in breaking his tie to the parent of the opposite sex. Because a father *is not* the girl's own father, or because the mother *is not* (biologically) the boy's own mother, it is easier for the adolescent to prolong his tie to that parent, and so where a close, warm feeling has existed between mother-adopted son, father-adopted daughter, it may be more difficult for the boy or girl *and for the parent* to accept the resentments, angers, estrangements which new development brings. In a sense, both parent and child may have invested their relationship with intense feelings of pride, anxiety, protectiveness so that adolescence may bring to the parent a loss of pride, or satisfaction, that is hurtful, and to the adolescent a loss of the deep admiration that formerly existed.

The adopted child in adolescence may reflect more vividly the "growing pains" of all adolescents who realize that they are individuals. He may try harder to find evidence that he is worth while, seeking admiration outside the home among contemporaries or other adults.

What do parents and other adults do about the situation? How can they assure the adolescent of their love as well as of his need for regulations and rules?

Parents may need to face the situation squarely to find out "What is troubling you?" The adolescent may need a revised statement about the kind of person he is, the importance of being himself and trusting his own worth. Also, he may need a statement to the effect that all adolescents go through this clash with parents and that *because* we love him we make demands and set some rules. Often the parent who avoids a direct approach to the defiant adolescent will unknowingly make indirect "digs" about him or his behavior, or will institute deprivations which only reinforce his feelings of being

unloved. Teachers and other adults also may need to pay special attention to such a defiant adolescent, making clear their position as helpers for the adolescent and not taking such defiance as a personal affront.

SELF-CONTROL

The stimulating, creative force for the young adolescent is the discovery that control is inside one's self: I must live this life, judge my own acts, choose for myself. (And it is also the reason for fluctuating despair, helplessness, guilt.) Early adolescence is a time of new, important learning—learning the consequences of one's own acts, the "good" consequences along with the "bad." It can be a period of tremendous ethical and creative growth, a period when adults are as important, with their fairness and generosity and respect, as they are for the school-beginner.

And we feel quite strongly that this period can be, at home with parents, a kind of rebirth, a reintegration of the young person's life. As we indicate in Chapter 6, how parents state expectations, what *reasons* they give for demands or rules, how they give independence, what they say about other people, about work, about a child's friends, are all extremely important for the adolescent's new revised image of himself. For the adolescent this time of new self-organization has profound possibilities for all kinds of creative growth and change, both psychologically and intellectually.

Before adolescence the child does not practice the kind of control demanded of adults. He has usually found some overt way, either on the playground or at school, of behaving as a child with other children. He gives his playmate a push; he cries when he is defeated or hurt. His repartee is peppered with "You're a dope," or, "You're a stinker." He shouts, argues, laughs, sulks, and acts "fresh."

With adolescence this whole gamut of behavior has to be altered. The barriers of adult conventional behavior are suddenly apparent, and the former outlets for emotional energy have to be given up in favor of conduct more acceptable to the adult world.

For a while, then, the young adolescent really disguises himself, takes over speech or dress or mannerisms which are, in a sense, "false-face." But *they may be necessary* until he can gradually drop the disguise and develop his own methods of approach to people.

However, some of these disguises, which may seem more palatable socially than the old shouting, taunting, or boasting, may actually be more destructive to the adolescent unless adults help him in dealing with situations and people. For example, a young child who is physically aggressive may at adolescence find another way to get prestige or relieve his anxiety; he may hurt others verbally, with slights, "digs," deprecatory comments. He may begin very early in the pre-pubertal phase to use biting sarcasm as his way of defense. He may try to find the acceptance he seeks in extreme competitiveness, academically, socially, or in sports, so that adults or agemates won't see the incompetence he feels. Or he may choose interests for which he has no real liking, in order to gain recognition, and then become frustrated and unhappy about himself.

ADOLESCENT FEELINGS AND THE PARENT OR TEACHER

It is the job of a parent or a teacher not to puncture the young adolescent's defenses or to probe the fears and feelings which are being protected and held in check. As we have indicated, these are often nameless feelings in the young adolescent, and they cannot be tagged literally as hate, anger, destructiveness. Many of them can assume highly creative forms in art, literature, dramatics, for growth and development at this period are creative, not destructive. Energy is being transformed, and it should be guided toward creation.

Therefore parents and teachers need to help the young adolescent to use his new emotional energies in positive ways. The adolescent needs direct evidence of his capacities *in what he does, not in what he feels*. Adults have to demand and expect activity, and they have to help these young adolescents to produce some form of expression which is satisfying and appreciated, which makes use of individual capacities and does not threaten or frustrate. As the young adolescent finds what he can do well, he does not have to retain his false protective disguises. When adults draw out a young adolescent's innate capacities he can see real evidence of them in art form, in language, in some constructive object. At this stage experiencing what you can do is almost the only way of believing you can do it!

ADOLESCENT FEELINGS AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Just as the adolescent needs adult expectations in work, so he needs the social standards of very fair adults as a protection. He needs limits that are clear and reasonable. He needs to understand what is kindness or cruelty to other human beings—not standards of mere surface politeness, but of real consideration and courtesy based on ideals about what is good for every human being. Young adolescents need such standards in fair adults for their own protection, so that gradually they will feel less vulnerable to hurt and helplessness.

While young adolescents may go through a phase of denying or concealing their individuality in order to find acceptance, adults must continually support the individual and help him see himself as capable enough, and strong enough, to *be* an individual. They sometimes attempt to do this by speeches or sermons that have absolutely no bearing on the young adolescent's actual day-by-day experiences. "Fairness" or "justice" are frequently referred to in the abstract, which is all right in that they are stated goals; but the helpless feelings of one "unpopular" adolescent, of a boy who is "failing" in his work, of a girl who is rejected by a clique, are what now color young people's concepts of "fairness" or "justice," and the way such problems are resolved, in terms of the present, has a long-range influence on what those concepts will mean in the future.

Fairness, justice, and kindness, like love, have to be felt as experience if they are to be truly understood. Ideas have to be stated, translated into everyday terms, and given a chance to mature. The young adolescent must feel that he is growing, not by giving up his right to be himself, but by developing that right as the most important part of getting ready to live as an adult person.

Groups of young adolescents, especially in large classes, may show, first, a sort of mass resistance to authority—it is as if they are afraid to conform, to be orderly, to stand on the side of authority; and, second, a tension that explodes easily into giggling, group rowdiness, noise. Each one seems to vie with another in show-offishness, boldness to adults.

It is important for adults to recognize, first, that such disorderliness requires adult control, and that adolescents are happier with some control; and, second, that, like the random, energetic "bounce" of the two-year-old, it is not "bad-

ness" and need not be treated as lawlessness. These boys and girls need very acutely an adult world that retains its own sense of integrity, its interest in fair play, and its regard for each individual. Because they are essentially trying to find a disguise for their individualities in group behavior (or misbehavior), they may need group rules and demands, but singling them out for public shaming and punishment may undermine the confidence and self-discipline which we want to promote.

EARLY ADOLESCENCE INVOLVES A SEARCH FOR ONE'S OWN GOALS

The pre-adolescent's or early adolescent's active search for status, his interest in joining and organizing clubs, in doing things and going places with his own sex group, in trying to find one area where he is "the best," is also an effort to feel that he is self-propelled. Often a boy or girl decides he or she wants to be an actor, a writer, a designer, a ballet dancer, and begins studying, taking lessons, seriously planning the career. Or, being idealistic, a young adolescent may want to be a nurse, a missionary, a doctor, a great and good leader. Adults should not deprecate or overemphasize these early choices. Any effort is important for itself, even when it does not lead to the ultimate goal. The activity and experience have some results in learning, for any work usually does, and the very act of striving is a trying of wings for working in the future.

Early choices may be dropped in a few years, but parents should not view them as waste of time, nor push the young adolescent to go on with what he has started. If he works intensively, but eventually changes his goal, nothing has been lost and a good deal has been gained. The girl who starts out to be a writer may end up a social worker; the boy who wants to be a minister may become a psychologist. The work itself and the feeling of making his own plans are what propel the young adolescent to the discovery of new fields and new abilities in himself. As parents, we should stop thinking of goals for the future as objectives at the end of a straight line. We should see the adolescent's activities as a continual process of maturing that enlarges knowledge and experience, that lets him discard immature goals or behavior and *feel that it is not only acceptable but desirable to discard those goals when they are no longer realistic for him.*

EARLY ADOLESCENCE INVOLVES RIVALRIES

The conflict in the young adolescent lies in the fact that he is as much an individual as he is a group-follower. One expression of his individuality is the rivalry he shows with members of his own sex, with parents or sisters and brothers. The rivalry can be "friendly" and it can be very "good" competition. But when the adolescent must rely on rivalry alone in his search for recognition the effect can be exceedingly damaging.

When there is *one* standard for "popularity" or achievement, when a school ignores the social aspects of adolescent living or ignores *every kind* of achievement but the academic kind, the result can be intense rivalry among girls and among boys. These rivalries are nearly always confined within each sex group, since boy-girl attitudes are usually bids for acceptance by the other sex.

Under a guise of group friendship, girls can hurt and belittle one another. And no wonder! If your status depends on doing one thing better than anybody else, you're going to dislike heartily the person who comes out ahead of you. Boys are rivals, too, in whatever "counts." The apple-polishers who give allegiance and loyalty to the teacher or the parent, and to no one else, are competing for approval in a way that is destructive to themselves and to their future relationships.

Jealousy is fairly usual in early adolescence among members of the same sex group. But adults aggravate such feelings when they praise achievement in *one* sphere, when they ignore the very wide range of other abilities and qualities that each boy or girl can demonstrate as an individual.

DISAGREEMENT WITH PARENTS

In this period the young adolescent asserts himself by disagreeing with his parents or by bickering and quarreling with other children in the family. Here again he is unpracticed at being a person in his own right and at wanting others to recognize it. With back-talk, contradictions, irritability, and sarcasm, he expresses his new independence and his desire to be less helpless than he feels, just as adults may quarrel or become hostile when they feel unrecognized or inadequate.

Often in young adolescence a boy or girl is overwhelmed with a revival of feelings of hate against parents, which is a

residue from hurtful experiences in the past. The adolescent is not usually conscious of these feelings; if he dares to recognize them his self-respect and good opinion of himself might receive a mortal blow. In this he is much like the very young child who senses that his hostility toward his parents is bad and even wants to be punished for it. The histories of very disturbed children show clearly the desperate fight that goes on against these "bad" feelings. Since children need the love of parents, the "wrong" feelings are continually being hidden and denied.

We should think of the show of antagonism in adolescence as an extension of the young person's great need for parents and for their love. The boy or girl may not be able to maintain his former allegiance or childish love for his parents, to carry the double burden of conforming for the world outside and for parents. The new demands outside home and inside himself can no longer be balanced with filial obedience and complete loyalty to parents.

When parents can give the adolescent assurances of their love, as well as of strength in himself, this early hate can dissolve into a more mature friendliness with parents. If they cannot, the weight of such feelings may plague the boy or girl throughout adolescence, turning him backward instead of forward, preoccupying him with a need for parents' love, which is not true growth. This continued turning inward to his private battle isolates the adolescent from his work, from his friends, and from his own "good" image of himself. *Most adolescents are struggling to retain that good image, not to find ammunition against parents.* When the pressure of hate feelings builds up in later adolescence, when the young man or woman finally believes that he is *unloved and unlovable*, we often see the defeat of good people, the complete loss of vitality or purpose in life.

Parents cannot be stingy in their admiration or respect for the adolescent; they need to respect their own position enough to be generous and tolerant of growth in their children. Hate can be accepted, not as a feeling the young adolescent wants to perpetuate, but as an expression of need for strength and independence.

CRUSHES AND OTHER FAMILIES

The crushes of pre-adolescence also occur in adolescence. This deep admiration and love for another (usually an older person) may be turned to a member of the opposite sex now,

although crushes on members of the same sex also persist. Such crushes are perfectly safe ground for boys and girls and merely state their aspirations to be good or do good.

Very often a boy or girl finds another family—a friend's family, perhaps—to which he is a constant visitor. In this devotion, as in his friendships, is often an element of release; that is, the family he admires may be the opposite of his own. A girl from an efficiently run household spends her spare time in the family where there seems to be no organization at all. A boy from a home where the father is a capable manager may like a friend's family in which the father is the "absent-minded professor" type. A girl whose mother is a professional woman may spend many evenings in the house next door where the mother is a homebody.

As in the adolescent's friendships, there is often an almost automatic magnetism between opposites. Boys and girls (and men and women) often turn in human relationships to that which is unlike themselves. Yet to parents this admiration for another family may seem like an unfavorable comment on their own home. Parents have to recognize that their pattern of living is not the only way of doing things. Another family may offer the adolescent a brand-new acceptance, just as it offers opportunity for *a new positive effort to win acceptance*. What an adolescent often finds in other parents is the absence of the great power he feels his own parents possess. The parents next door seem more human because their rules are not bound up with his own past history of feeling. They may have faults and peculiarities which can give the adolescent a sense of closeness to adults, as well as a perspective on them. He learns that they make mistakes, need help, have difficulties. He finds that he is listened to and spoken to with respect, with appreciation of his humor, his interests, his opinions.

Again, too, we have to remember the two sexes. When a girl finds that the father next door admires her and jokes with her, she feels like an acceptable feminine person. The adolescent boy may be extremely proud of some ability or helpfulness which he can display for the mother next door and thus show his masculinity.

We seldom try to impress the people who know us best. Even as adults we need the admiration of those outside, though we may be well loved and admired in our intimate relationships. In the same way the adolescent gets a sense of completeness, a proof of his independent worth, from other families.

EARLY ADOLESCENCE IS A MIXTURE OF CONTRADICTIONS

Both for himself and for his parents, then, the young adolescent is a mixture of contradictions which he himself cannot understand or govern easily. Face to face with a whole new world, he feels he must start from the beginning to get to know himself. For example, many a boy or girl who is given sex instruction in early adolescence—having had all the “facts” earlier—says to his parents, “You never told me that.”

He wants help, yet often resists it; he asks for advice, then challenges that advice. He wants complete love or sympathy, then rejects it. At times he seems fumbling and uncoordinated, especially when he must do something “to order”; yet he may possess amazing skill and coordination in sports, art work, dancing.

Boys and girls want admiration, but they often show irritation toward adults who offer it. They dislike being told to do things, and yet ask parents for rules or suggestions. They want fairness, and still may be unkind to a younger sister or brother.

An adolescent's new feelings are in themselves contradictions of what he wants to be. Resenting parents, he may bury that resentment. Acting silly or “loud” with his friends, he may feel disgusted with his behavior. His new reflection of himself, as if seen in a mirror, is a denial of what he wishes himself to be. The familiar self-image that has been built up over childhood years is now shattered. It is this shattering in his own eyes which makes him unsteady and unsure. He is trying to find a coherent image, and parents and other adults must help him construct it.

On the other hand, the young adolescent may feel he is grown up and then discover the restrictions or barriers which still separate him from the adult world. There is a story of a twelve-year-old at a family party. She has just changed—and changed under protest—from the careless little girl who wore blue jeans and rather soiled polo shirts to the young lady with nylons and lipstick. She is very conscious of her changed status; she helps graciously at the party, greets guests with new self-conscious, well-chosen words, and expects that everyone will now treat her as a mature person.

To the observer she seems to be happy—smiling, making conversation, sitting with the older adolescents and adults. Later, the party over, she bursts into tears. “No one talked to

me the whole evening!" The sudden realization that she is still a child is a blow. She feels her lack of status as an adult and the loneliness of separation from childhood. This in-between state is confusing and often depressing for the young adolescent.

GUILT AND ADOLESCENCE

The period of finding a new and acceptable self-image is one that may breed a complex load of guilt in the adolescent. His feelings toward parents are mixed, though he may not be conscious or *want* to be conscious of this mix-up. His first discovery of sex may provoke "silly" behavior, an excited interest in the opposite sex, a fight against parental restrictions on late hours, parties, or certain friendships. Then there are the impulses he cannot help, the melancholy moods, the daydreams and fantasies. All of these may result in feelings of deep guilt.

Almost every case history of "problem" adolescents shows that the child goes through the first intense, excited stage of adolescence and then suddenly, from having been a "well-behaved," conforming child, becomes anti-social, anti-adult, and turns to a crowd of friends who openly defy conventions. But we know that adolescent feeling alone does not provoke this sudden complete disregard for society. There is usually a history of intense guilt about the body, harsh parental punishment for past childish behavior, and extremely rigid family rules for conduct. The coming of adolescent feeling, on top of the self-image the child has had, is the proof to him of what he has been told: he is "bad," and the effort to be "good" seems hopeless.

Why is it so important to let the people who matter know how you feel? We don't know. Probably because you're never sure (until you get it out) how *they'll* feel about the way *you* feel, and whether you're okay—and possibly right—when you feel that way!

The tragedy of disturbed, unhappy children does not lie in their inability to express their feelings. Far from it: usually they "express" so much in harmful behavior that no one can live with them. The pity is that they have been unable to say it adequately to the people who really count, to those at whom the feeling is really directed, and then to get the kind of response which says: "You're still acceptable. We all feel that way. Things others do make us mad—but we get over it.

You've got perfectly good reason for being mad occasionally—just as we do. You can't love us all the time, steadily. We're not *that* good."

The young adolescent's intense guilt about himself can stifle the desire to seek others beyond the family for companionship or love. Or it can mean that he turns to others in an indiscriminate fashion, trying to prove he is acceptable. Unless adults help to lighten the load by what they say, guilt about an adolescent's behavior may interfere with his work and get in the way of healthy relationships with the opposite sex. The sensation of being no good, or only doubtfully good, of continually wondering whether he is doing the right thing, is confusing and weakening to his judgment and self-discipline.

An adolescence spent fighting childish feelings of guilt, rage, and helplessness is a waste of precious life-time when young men and women should be able to admire themselves for what they can do. They need the kind of rules, demands, and parental attitudes that will save them from this intense guilt. Groups of adolescents also need approved places and times for having fun so that they are not continually afraid that anything short of adult "fun" is silly or wrong.

MIDDLE TO LATE ADOLESCENCE: REORGANIZATION

The fluid quality of early adolescence may lead, then, to a new image of the person, and to new possibilities for behavior, or to a sharper outlining and accenting of the "same old" image of the past.

The early adolescent has been preoccupied with his new relationships with his agemates. These may create bewilderment; he has to be (he feels) so many different kinds of people: the person he is at home, the person he tries to be with his friends, the person he is in school. He may feel hypocritical, untrue to himself, or he may feel unable to make all these people add up to one true person.

So after the excitement (and often disappointment) of early adolescence, the boy or girl may turn to interests and friendships with a few members of his own sex group. Here he can be himself and find a recognized status.

Many boys who are maturing slowly enter, in the mid-teens, a period when lethargy and inability to work easily are marked. They may turn away from the opposite sex and take

refuge in male companionship. They may exhibit some of the typical disorganization of early adolescence, even to sloppiness in clothing and body care.

It is very important to encourage these middle-adolescent boys, as well as girls, to develop their masculine and feminine interests with others of their own sex. For one thing, such companionship provides a way of developing physical skills, especially in boys, and, for another, it helps neutralize the competition for dates and popularity which may leave the young person bewildered about his capacities.

In the middle to late teens, also, the adolescent, having emerged from the closeness to his parents of earlier years, may turn for approval and love to one member of the opposite sex. His need for complete acceptance as a person may be especially keen, because of social demands, school demands, and his own mixed-up feelings about himself and his past. So you may find early love relationships developing in this period as situations where adolescents feel they are accepted for themselves and where they may act out their ideals for themselves as grown-up men and women.

"PUPPY LOVE"

The development of a more mature love pattern for adulthood is one of the preoccupations and tasks of the middle to late adolescent. This means development of the ability to give as well as to get. It means discovery of an ability to communicate with others, to trust them, and to learn what is harmful and what is good for them (and for everyone) in love relationships.

What we unwisely call "puppy love," which occurs usually in the middle-adolescent period, is the first flowering of the adolescent's giving. Such love often expresses all the protective, generous impulses of a person and transference of his devotion from his parents to another person. Especially when an adolescent has had a warm relationship to a parent, in mid-adolescence he seems to turn the deep, protective love to another person.

Such love, like the adolescent's guilt or mixed feelings toward parents, may result in hurt, or in very good growth for the growing person. Here again experience outside home and parents' attitudes are the most important forces which determine the outcome.

Therefore, if parents consider their son's or daughter's

feelings as legitimate and deep, they can now give the youth a sense of the responsibilities which love for other people involves, of the occasional hurts which any kind of love always involves. Also, the youth must understand that he still needs many experiences with different kinds of people, so that he can go on developing as a person and finding out more about himself and others. Early love can be a retreat or withdrawal for young people unless we provide opportunities for doing things together, and work out situations where they can go on finding satisfaction and prestige, too.

This love of middle or later adolescence, like the love of adults, can contribute to creativity and "giving" for the rest of the world. It can be a dynamic for pursuing goals, for working, and for self-improvement.

You can't teach or lecture to any adolescent in terms of *general* ethical standards. The specific situation, in this case a love relationship, is what starts him thinking specifically—about his behavior in relation to others, about the full meaning of sexuality, and about the meaning *to another person* of what he does. With the feeling of love, sex becomes human and can be understood by the adolescent as an interpersonal, human relationship. When another person's welfare is dear, then an adolescent can understand why and when control is necessary. He has to consider himself (and should be told that he has this right), his goals and his self-image; also, he should be told that others should consider him, his feelings, and his worth.

The adolescent should have a respect for what he wants and chooses, and should learn to understand that he doesn't continually have to be the person who gives everything. That is not good for his future or for the other person.

When adolescents learn that one *has to make an effort* to develop relationships, to give and to find satisfactions, that one has to have a "healthy selfishness" about one's own feelings and a healthy self-love about one's body and one's capacities, then the hurts or rejections which may come in this early deep love do not "swamp" the young person, make him feel bitter, or give him the notion that he is unlovable.

Without deprecating other young people, we can ask our adolescents to understand that few of us, or few of them, are mature enough to understand what they do to hurt others and that, without being callous or rigid people, we need to hold certain defenses, and we need occasionally to reject things that others do which are harmful to us. A wife or a husband cannot always accept the demands or suggestions

of a spouse. She or he needs to know when they create resentment and why—and be honest about it.

This is the lesson children should learn when they quarrel with some of our demands. A little girl who always “gives” to her father or mother what is wanted, and gets acceptance in that way, is not going to have a great deal of strength for deciding what *she* wants (or doesn’t want) in a later love relationship. *She must be told not to fear that she will lose love when she rejects some parental demands, for her own good. She should be helped to understand why she rejects demands, and why she wishes to do what she thinks is wiser for her and her needs.*

The very best aspect of adolescence in America is the constant companionship between the two sexes. Boys and girls get to know one another as people—to rate one another as people, and to expect sincere behavior. If you know any boys and girls who were reared in the old tradition of complete isolation of sexes, you also know the stiff and scared atmosphere of distance between the two. You know, too, the story of the girl who feels the first flush of attraction to a male (having known mighty few males), “falls in love,” marries, and—wham!—finds out there is nothing really basically attractive to her in the man she has married.

Today most boys, as well as girls, are given an opportunity to work and play with members of the other sex, and are much more level-headed and open-eyed about “sex” and the female’s role in getting attention. But boys, too, want love and admiration, and so they must get some sense of who they are, what they have to offer, and what their masculine responsibilities, now and in the future, are. Each sex helps the other, in control as well as in love and mating, and, though we don’t want our boys hard-headed, we do want them to feel somewhat self-protective in their relationships, and honest about girls and their feelings. There is no point in having a boy become tied to a girl he doesn’t love because what he wants desperately is some attention and love.

Very often an early love relationship, in which one member idealizes the other and “gives his whole heart,” may be dissolved when a young person realizes that *he* has been giving everything and not having any fun himself! This may mean a hurt, and a deep hurt. But with an understanding of the reason such relationships may fail (because of one person’s inability to give, to be flexible, to be aware of the other’s needs) a young person may then begin to discover that he has to consider himself, and has to base his relationships on

common understanding and interests, and mutual ability to meet problems halfway. Many people don't find this out until after marriage or even after divorce.

Our privately coined word for such experiences is "good" traumas ("good" hurts), since we cannot find another word or phrase in the literature that describes them. Hurts can be growing experiences for anyone, and usually are. It is up to us to help the adolescent understand them and face forward!

CREATIVE GROWTH

As we have said again and again, feeling or impulse in human beings finds a channel in creative work. Adolescents write poetry and read it, collect records, think philosophically. Physical expression is not enough for the human race, not even for man at his "primitive" level. The power and depth of human feeling have become the great music, art, and literature of the past. We cheat our adolescents when we deny them chances to create, because we are blocking a channel of expression which not only is valid and socially acceptable, but in turn enriches the feelings that already exist. If we had our way, we'd provide in every high school a room with every kind of art material for adolescents, including even the sand and toys that young children use. And in this room we'd let the adolescent combine materials as he wished, so that, once more as when he was a child, he could begin to realize anew the texture of things, the endless possibilities for putting feeling and impulse into form and structure.

The middle-to-late adolescent often becomes philosophical, relating his own feelings to those of all mankind. He is concerned about the common man, about life, peace, happiness, about his relationships to his parents and to others. He is now better able to criticize himself and to determine his own values for living. He can be encouraged to do things for others, and to consider helping others as an important part of his goals.

He is interested in ethical considerations: why do people do things that are unfair, unjust, when we are taught not to? In other words, he looks at his ideals for behavior and contrasts them with real situations where people do not live up to ideals. This poses a personal problem: what course should we choose in certain situations where some people are dishonest, unfair?

Very often what the later adolescent sees as his "disillusionment" in people is actually an unwillingness to face his own

tasks and problems. Instead of parental solicitude, he may need a little push toward experiences on summer jobs, toward taking more responsibility in planning for himself insofar as an allowance is concerned, family jobs, vacations, and so on.

Sometimes the older adolescent turns back for parental support in this "disillusionment," rather than face his own inadequacies. Frequently a parental nudge toward greater independence, as well as more personal responsibility for the young person, gives him a chance to grapple with real problems in everyday terms and to translate his ideals into his own self-propelled actions.

This does not mean that "disillusionment" is an abnormal reaction in adolescence by any means. There is a wide discrepancy between our ideals and actions. Today especially the adolescent comes to the threshold of maturity and is saddened by what he sees. So are adults.

But the important thing for parents to remember is that adolescents need to know their communities, their government agencies, and they need (as we point out in the school section) to find real ways of working to make better communities. There are lots of good people as well as bad people in the world. Adolescents need to discover this, and to discover the complexity of jobs and the good hard work that goes into doing those jobs well.

BEING AN INDIVIDUAL

From the age of fifteen to about eighteen most adolescents seem to "settle down"; they enjoy friendships, dates, parties. Rebelliousness at home still occurs, but, on the whole, they learn to compromise about late hours, jobs to be done, clothing allowances; they are more reasonable about polite or conventional behavior with adults, relatives, friends.

In general, when the adolescent has a satisfying relationship with his contemporaries, there seems to be once more a minimum of irritability and disturbance with parents. This does not mean the adolescent is placid or agreeable to all rules and regulations. However, he is better able to manage explosiveness and to talk reasonably or humorously about home demands.

You may often find that very normal boys or girls of fifteen or sixteen show their attitudes to authority by occasional Halloween-like pranks, or by stunts or by mischievous pilfering—of subway posters, signs, and the like. Usually there is

a sort of bravado which is not malicious destructiveness but mainly a challenge to the adult world—taking a dare, making a gesture of defiance without actually damaging the world.

Again, however, we have to caution parents about thinking of a “typical” adolescent. Not only is each one different in his rate of body development, but each one may have his own special, different life history and difficulties. You may find one girl bubbly, excited, happy at the ages of twelve and thirteen, when she has just found out she is able to be grown-up, wear lipstick, stay out late occasionally, and have dates. Two years later, if she does not get along with most of her schoolmates, or if there are no boys who date her, or if school pressure and home pressure for achievement are bearing down hard on her, she may show some of the disorganization, explosiveness, resentments which we often associate with young adolescence (twelve, thirteen, or fourteen).

On the whole, middle to late adolescence is a time when the boy or girl *practices being an individual*. As in the pre-adolescent days, he begins to develop a social personality all his own: he tries to find the places where he is strong; he likes being “different,” especially when he gains recognition for it. When he cannot get this acceptance from his contemporaries he may try to get it from adults by being a good scholar, a good talker, a good son or daughter.

The boy or girl now brings his friends home because he can accept and enjoy his family’s “different” qualities. He feels proud of the special character of his parents, too. He wants to be treated as an adult, listened to, and respected.

The middle-to-late adolescent has learned to build a façade, a pattern, for dealing with frustrations, with the opposite sex, with his work, with adults. With this pattern he maintains his balance, protects himself from being hurt, either by others or by his own feelings of inadequacy.

The outside superficial “coating” of earlier adolescence with clothes and make-up is refined into ways of behaving, talking, joking, working that make up one definite individual. When you read a high-school yearbook with its descriptions of the graduating-class members, you find that every boy or girl has a niche of his own; not only has he become a very distinct personality, but it is clear that he has “put himself over” and been recognized by others for his individuality with its foibles or mannerisms.

Although the boy or girl seems more independent of parents than before, he may, nevertheless, in these mid-years of adolescence, maintain a delicate balance and control be-

tween his social self outside home and the kind of person his parents want him to be. Early adolescent rebellion does not mean that a young person releases himself from the authority and power of parents' words. In fact, the earlier rebellion is often only a token, and he may cover it up or deny it to himself.

So you have a wide range of adolescent behavior which serves (a) as a protection for each young person against his own feelings and (b) as a social outlet for feelings which he does not or cannot express to parents.

You find the disturbed adolescent at one end of the scale, taking out on himself or society the helpless feeling, the sense of "badness" which he carries from earlier days. You have the "normal" range of behavior: the boy who blames others (not himself, not parents) for his difficulties; the girl who is sulky or sullen with adults but bright and witty with her contemporaries; the youth who is afraid of the rejection or competition of his agemates, seeks approval and companionship in the adult world. Then there is the responsible boy or girl who ties himself in knots of self-blame or self-criticism, worrying about his deficiencies, unable to turn anger or resentment against his parents or against his friends.

The middle-to-late adolescent, therefore, may still have some important tasks to face (a) in revising his picture of himself, (b) in facing his resentments against the adult world, and therefore (c) in accepting his mixed feelings about his parents without feeling disloyal—in other words, in seeing them as people toward whom he can (and does) direct his resentment as well as love—and, finally, (d) in taking his work in his own hands, making his own life, instead of blaming others for the problems he faces.

This does not mean that the older adolescent is a bundle of sulks or repressions. On the contrary, he is frequently at his happiest; parents are often impressed with the charm and kindness of their sons and daughters at this age, with the deepening understanding and humor about life shown by the young people. A short while ago we read a statement by seventeen-year-olds declaring that they were looking forward to the happiest years of their lives!

As a sociable person the boy or girl may have a good time; as an individual he may still reflect unsureness about himself in his attitudes to work and to adults. Again, this does not mean that adults should look for problems that do not exist. Rather, it means helping the adolescent to face and cope with difficulties that do exist. Very frequently the core of such

difficulties lies in the fear of failure, and often help in assessing his strengths gives the later adolescent a basis for looking at his mistakes or problems honestly.

REVISING THE SELF-IMAGE

The later adolescent, then, is laying down foundations for adult patterns of conduct with others. Most frequently it is the school person, teacher or guidance worker, who sees areas where a boy or girl is dodging his problems or building up behavior patterns and attitudes that result in unhappiness for the person himself. The following patterns are most frequent.

1. A boy or girl may set up attitudes to adult authority that make it impossible for him to get the acceptance and support he needs; he shuts himself off from the advice or friendliness of the adult world. Such a "chip on the shoulder" attitude usually results from a fearfulness about himself and his work: "Criticism means I am all bad and all wrong." This bottled-up fear of failure is often a reason for escaping work, for choosing jobs or friendships that are not really sound or satisfying for the young person.

2. The later adolescent may be obsessed by adult standards, and so, again, he is overcritical of himself and afraid to make mistakes.

3. The young man or woman may be afraid of the responsibilities and jobs that his own sex involves. Again, this may mean that he is afraid of repeating the pattern set by his father or mother—or he may be fearful of losing their protection.

So once more we make a plea that parents help their sons and daughters to think of themselves and their jobs as separate and distinct from parents' jobs. We ask parents to urge their adolescents to face their work without fear of making mistakes, to say, "This is a life that has never been lived before, and you are a person entitled to have likes and dislikes, choices of your own." We ask parents not to be afraid of occasional anger; often it gives the adolescent a chance to protest in turn and to release his own angry feelings.

In these years it is so easy for parents to be overprotective, to offer themselves as the kind of people who will always be there to make things right, smooth, and easy for their children.

There may be situations where adolescents really need help: schools that are unwise in their pressures either socially

or academically; work situations where the adolescent starts to do something he is not able to do. *In such cases we may need honestly to take stock with the adolescent of the school or the friends or the job, and help him, if it is at all possible, to change and to feel that a change can be made for the better. Sometimes such a change makes all the difference between a defeated, unhappy adolescent and a purposeful, capable one.*

We need to love our adolescents—yes, to admire them and state our admiration for them. We need to show interest in their work, in their friends, in their ideas. But we also need to make clear that they have certain jobs to do, such as getting along with their contemporaries, being men or women on their own, which we cannot obliterate or smooth out with our love. The problems they face, the people they meet are important; dodging them, by blaming others or themselves or us, does not lead to a solution of human relationships or happiness for the individual.

We have to remember continually that it is as satisfying for the adolescent to get over a "hump" as it is for the young child to climb his first Jungle-Gym or ride his first two-wheeler—as long as he is not plagued by our distrust in his ability or in other people.

And, parents, don't be disturbed by your awareness of your boy's or girl's troubles. Keep your faith in his ability to deal with them, and don't make him feel he is a "problem" adolescent. Listen to what the good teachers have to say; hold back on your pressures and your interference when this is indicated. If your adolescent needs special help from a counselor or therapist *who knows adolescents*, your child is not the only one. The stresses and strains on you and your family today, and on the adolescent, may lead to tension you or he cannot understand without the experienced help of an outsider.

As we note elsewhere, the so-called adolescent revolt may occur when the young person is in his late high-school or early college years. Today young adolescents are very frequently protected socially and economically so that there is no occasion for deep personal anxiety about the future, or even for rebellion against parents.

Finally, however, when mature work choices must be made, when the young man or woman has to decide what he can do on his own, the late adolescent may go through a period of revolt that reflects his new evaluation of himself. You may then find depression, disagreement with or criti-

cism of parents, work choices in opposition to parents' plans, that sadden or bewilder the older generation. Again, we have to remember that the adolescent does really have to face himself, rather than assume a position of parent-blamer. The important thing for parents and for him to realize is that his life is still his own job, that there are many ways to approach the job, and that what he needs mainly is to gain confidence by doing the job in his own way with the advice and help perhaps of an adult other than parents.

RETREAT

After the initial excitement of early adolescence, some later adolescents may retreat into intellectual endeavor, into art or music or science. This can happen when they feel that the boy-girl atmosphere merits parental disdain, or when it appears to be a threat that asks too much effort or increases their feelings of helplessness.

There is no absolute "normal" pattern of behaving for later adolescence. Every young person tries to strike a "balance"—to do what is acceptable in the best way he can. He uses his own safeguards according to his abilities, in whatever area they may be. Sometimes an intensive retreat to art or studies is a way of protecting himself from the hurts of deep relationships. *Very often this is far wiser than following prevailing group patterns.* We have to be careful of tagging such behavior as anti-social or escapist. In later adolescence the group is not so necessary for protection, and the young man or woman is more able to work and think as an individual.

"SLUMP"

In the middle to late adolescent period, when a youth seeks his own social and intellectual goals apart from what parents want, there may be definite "slumps" in achievement. This drop very often indicates that his attention has been turned to human relationships and to his own feelings. Frequently he cannot maintain clear intellectual thinking when situations are loaded with feelings and emotion.

He is "lazy," slow, dreamy. Art, poetry, music, dancing often get much greater attention than other work, and he is "better" at them than he ever was earlier; they give him an opportunity to express ideas plus feelings. Just as the little child finds in his play a "good" reflection of himself, so the

adolescent begins to recognize the potentialities for the good and positive in his own feelings as translated into creative efforts.

Very frequently there is in mid-adolescence a period of turning back to the family for a while, a kind of searching for love and approval which the adolescent may feel he has lost. We have known many adolescents going through these wistful, lonely periods. They seem to want attention from parents in a special way, to do things with them again, and to have them show interest in school and other activities. They may be mixed-up about ethical considerations so far as their sexuality is concerned, and they do need to formulate some ethical aspirations about themselves and about men and women in general. Don't be afraid to say what you feel is right or wrong—as long as you don't give the impression that it is wrong to have feelings.

THE WHOLE ADOLESCENT

For our "whole" adolescent there must be adults beyond home as guides for situations beyond home, about which we may know so little as to confuse or embarrass the young person with our interpretations. In many cases it is wise to suggest to the adolescent when he is deeply troubled that he go to an adult beyond home whom he trusts for some insight into his own problem. Such adults—guidance people, for example, or therapists, if they are adults who understand their jobs—seldom give advice, but, as we ask parents to do, try to help the adolescent to understand and help himself, show him that he has the power to help himself.

It is unwise to subject to scrutiny every situation, everything an adolescent chooses, asking, "What's in back of that?" An adolescent usually does what is best for him in terms of his defenses, capacities, and past experiences. Instead of microscoping his acts to look for the "bugs" in them, let's ask him to remember *that various possibilities are open when one method doesn't work; that every relationship a person has is unlike all others; that relationships (like quarrels) depend on two or more people, not on one; and that he can meet people and relationships with the ever-present possibility of changing his ideas and "growing them up."*

Finally we ask parents not to dash to books for theories to fit one particular adolescent. Deal with the *specific situation*. Think of it in terms of *you, the adolescent's group, his way*

of doing things now and in the past, which may give you clues to his strengths and his weaknesses with other people. Help him to see the situation as *his* situation and how he, or others, can help to alter it. That particular situation has never been met before, and you cannot reach conclusions, but you can offer tentative ways of looking at it, so the adolescent won't feel deadlocked or frightened.

Have you ever read an "Advice to the Lovelorn" column? The advice may be trite occasionally, but you can see that a skillful adviser offers the possibilities (or call it hopefulness) which adolescents need. They dig themselves into holes, very often, worrying about problems all by themselves. Usually they dig in because they are so straightforward they don't know what else to do. A boy wants to tell a girl that he doesn't want to "go around" with her any longer, but doesn't know how. She, in turn, senses his attitude and calls him uncaring, unkind. Then he thinks maybe it *is* his fault, and so on. The idea that there is a positive way of stating things, or a reason for considering himself, or even a good reason in terms of the girl herself, for making a break, may not have occurred to him.

Or take jobs. An adolescent may feel he has to decide "what to be" before he takes any job. Not necessarily. He can try a number of things and get to know what he has to offer. Again, many adolescents never think of looking at it this way.

Finally, where sex is concerned we must also consider the specific "whole" adolescent and what sexual impulses or experiences may do to him, in terms of his past, his friends, and his goals in life. We have to remember the guilt connected with the past and the *dynamics* operating from the past and from parents. For example, is the adolescent girl purposefully seeking sexual experience because in the family she has had little recognition as a young woman? Or is a boy trying to prove his virility? Or has a divorce in the family given the young person a powerful craving for love and reassurance?

Take the problem of a deep tie to one parent. Is the adolescent merely looking for a kind of acceptance which he won't find in his contemporaries? His father or mother may need to act *more like a father or a mother* to help him break the too strong parental bond and turn to his agemates. To effect the break, such an adolescent may need just out-and-out anger from the parent he adores; at the same time he must realize that the parent *does* really care for him.

Is he trying to escape from pressures and anxiety in the world, plus pressure in school for achievement, plus similar

pressure at home? That is a very common combination which pushes the adolescent into what he thinks is "love."

Is he just plain lonesome? Boys and girls are, very often. Remember the value of closeness at home, of opportunities to talk sympathetically and hopefully about the pressures and anxieties they may be withstanding. Often parents leave their adolescents to the mercy of heavy pressures from schools or other adults, without giving them the idea of independence and choice which will help them to deal with their problems wisely.

Not *all* the adults beyond home are wise. Not *all* the pressures are good. Parents have to help an adolescent to learn to discriminate, to trust his feelings and his integrity, to handle private problems carefully and thoughtfully so that his prestige and his image in the eyes of others won't be destroyed. Girls especially need more confidence in their feminine values and intuitive judgments.

But don't give adolescents the idea that they have to spread their private problems all over the map. They need discretion and privacy, and they need to keep their feelings to themselves unless they can trust adults. Their feelings are not school or public property, and they shouldn't be probed or exposed—even in family discussions. If we want to have our adolescent keep a sense of what is good taste, let's keep our own. We don't "socialize" our sex lives, or air our private emotions, and it is wrong to think that the adolescent should do so. A rude break into an adolescent's privacy very often tears down his defenses in behavior, which he has taken a long time to build.

The "whole" adolescent needs our good common sense, our friendship, and our love. In writing of the adolescent we often think of the old fairy tale about three boys who go out into the world to seek their fortune. When the first leaves, his mother asks, "Will you take a whole loaf of bread with my curse, or half a loaf with my blessing?" He chooses the whole loaf and the curse. So does the second brother, and both of them meet with misfortune. The third boy takes the half-loaf and the blessing, and thereby, of course, hangs a tale of good fortune.

So the story of our adolescents is the story of "seeking their fortunes" with whatever material assistance we give them, however small—but always with our blessing. The "curse" is the guilty, the "bad" self-image; the blessing is the "good" self-image we give them to meet their problems head-on.

LIFE TASKS OF OUR ADOLESCENT BOYS AND GIRLS

In this chapter we consider the "long-term goals" of adolescents—that is, what they see as the tasks they must accomplish and what they aspire to do in their future lives. Many of these goals are not immediate, do not seem pressing to the prepubertal girl or boy. But they direct his expectations and his work; they affect, for example, the behavior of a young girl as she changes from a little child to a prepubertal girl. They affect the way she dresses and talks to boys. They focus her feelings about sex and her ideas about being feminine.

* Some societies have group rituals or initiation ceremonies for channeling the feelings and behavior of pubertal boys and girls. The ritual may be a tribal dance or a painful initiation ordeal or betrothal to a future mate. The group says in effect: This is what you do to become a man or a woman. You dress this way, dance thus, learn these skills; the rite will purify you and give you acceptance and status in the group. You are no longer a protected child but a responsible participant in group living.

Our goals are not so clearly stated or so quickly attained. Most adolescents are, for example, a long way from marriage. But marriage is, nevertheless, one of our goals, and young males and females orient themselves quite early to the picture of a future married life. They look for signs or symbols of how they should behave in various stages of adolescence to achieve acceptable masculinity or femininity.

In our society there is a prolonged period of waiting and preparing before the adolescent actually participates in adult life, before he can marry and have the way of life he desires. Even boys and girls who are compelled to leave school and go to work at the earliest possible age are still regarded as

minors, subject to parental and other adult supervision, and restricted in many ways. For a period of years, then, adolescents must attempt to meet a number of demands and expectations, cope with various difficult life tasks, as the only way to reach adulthood. These tasks cannot be evaded or postponed; the way the adolescent faces up to them and works out his individual solution to his problems will largely determine the direction of his adult life. We realize nowadays that the best preparation for tomorrow is to live fully and adequately today. When the child or adolescent finds fulfillment in behavior that is necessary and appropriate at each stage of his development, he is less likely to go on burdened with "unfinished business," which usually handicaps him as he grows older and still seeks, in various disguised ways, what he failed to attain when it was permissible and desirable.

Let us keep in mind that growing up means more than physical growth and development. Growing up takes place through the process of maturation, as the individual boy or girl gives up or relinquishes what he has long believed, done, and felt, and learns a new way of thinking, of acting, of feeling, and especially of relating himself to others. Maturation therefore is often difficult, even painful, because it hurts to abandon what one has been accustomed to, what has been an adequate and satisfying way of behaving, to learn a new pattern, often awkwardly and fearfully. But unless the individual can give up and learn new patterns and new relations with others, he will continue to be an infant, a child, an adolescent, unable to accept the privileges and the responsibilities of adult life.

Maturation, therefore, is the key to healthy, happy living, as we can see when we look at the many persons who are unable to "be their ages," who cling to the patterns and relations which were once good but are now inadequate and often self-defeating. Maturation begins in early infancy and should continue throughout life as the individual accepts the possibilities for each succeeding age on into old age. Since the range of such changes is probably greatest in adolescence, these years are of crucial importance to the individual personality and his future life career. How he meets his life tasks and how he copes with them are significant, therefore, not only for his present living but for his future, because each of these life tasks and each of his aspirations is a sort of blueprint for his adult living.

We should stop and reflect on the number and variety of these changes in roles which the adolescent must achieve,

and then realize how difficult it is to reconcile these new roles into a more or less integrated or coherent whole. The adolescent is continually troubled by the question "Who am I?" and must somehow discover himself as a person who not only can but must assume all these roles and also be himself.

The adolescent boy or girl can no longer be the familiar child of his parents but must become another kind of son or daughter, as well as a new kind of brother or sister. He begins to develop the masculine or feminine role in new relations with parents and siblings. All the other roles—those of grandchild, nephew, niece, pupil, friend, especially relationships with those adults who have been called "aunt" or "uncle"—must be revised to permit the adolescent to become a grown-up.

We may look at the adolescent, therefore, as a youthful candidate for admission to our society, facing a number of tasks and requirements, and also aspiring to whatever he or she cherishes as goal values. As we shall see, probably the most important element in the life of an adolescent in his image of himself—how he actually pictures himself, what he thinks he should be, and what he hopes or strongly desires to be. How he revises his image of himself as he grows older is therefore often crucial.

While we must discuss these several demands and aspirations one by one, we should remember that they are never separate and distinct—nor are they recognized in these terms by the adolescent. Indeed, adolescents seldom reflect upon their lives in such a detached way and may be astonished to be told what they are actually doing. When, therefore, we talk about the adolescent's striving for individuality, his eager search for "belonging," his bewilderment and often acute anxiety over the masculine—or feminine—role, we must remember that we are looking at him through adult eyes, in an effort to gain some insight into the active, often frantic, lives of adolescent boys and girls.

Frequently people cannot or will not accept changes in the adolescent, but insist upon his continuing to be the child they have always known. At the same time the boy or girl has to be prepared to shift from a familiar role to a new and not too familiar one, altering his approaches and responses to others to fit the new relationship. Inevitably there are conflicts, incongruities, often disturbing, and at best embarrassing and confusing. The adolescent may wonder: What am I expected to do? What can I do without getting into trouble and provoking people? The company of his own age

group offers a refuge from these continual strains and disappointments with adults, but, as we shall see, brings other stresses.

As we discuss adolescents' life tasks and goals, let us remember that we are talking about real-life situations. Boys and girls are anxiously striving to grow up, but they are frequently blocked and defeated because they cannot discover appropriate roles for themselves and establish relationships that will help them to alter their goals. Much of the difficulty of the teen-age period arises from sheer lack of definition; adolescents do not know what they can, cannot, must, and must not do in innumerable new and unexpected situations. Many of these occur outside the home, and parents may not realize how much their son or daughter is genuinely disturbed. And if the parents also refuse to accept their maturing boy or girl, insist upon his continuing to be a docile, obedient child, and try to forbid any alteration in his behavior—then the adolescent may indeed be in trouble, as we so frequently see today.

LIFE TASKS: FINDING A PLACE IN THE PEER GROUP

When professional people talk about the "peer group" they mean a group of agemates. Books for teachers or guidance workers make frequent reference to what the peer group demands of its members, why certain behavior occurs in the peer group, how it is shaped and channeled in the peer culture. Here we find stated some of the reasons *why* children behave as they do in groups, in the process of seeking acceptance by their agemates. A few generations ago the adults in and outside of a home accepted young people as people as well as members of a community. But nowadays there are few such friendly groups of adults and children which fully accept growing youngsters as part of the social scene. Social life separates the old and young except within the family, and there are few occasions flexible enough to provide fun for young and old together.

So the real living—finding happy times—as young people grow up together has become a problem they often have to solve on their own. Their behavior has to pattern itself into boy-girl relationships slowly, hesitatingly, in a confused fashion, frequently without the guidance and sanction of adults. Moreover, they go to school, study, play in, and try to

fit into a society made up of people of many different backgrounds, with widely differing codes and standards. A boy or girl may rarely, if ever, meet the parents of his classmates.

The teen-age child tries to live at his own level of growth and capacity, and to find others like himself. He cannot, at twelve or fourteen, meet the standards for adult living. The child's group sets patterns of behavior for a child, and these fit only roughly to the emotional stages of that child. Often the patterns are set by slightly older, often more sophisticated, boys and girls whom the younger ones greatly admire and wish to imitate.

In the teens many of the current forms of prejudice and discrimination against others of different races, colors, or religions become active. An adolescent may suddenly find himself rejected, perhaps for the first time in his life. Frequently boys and girls who have no dislike for or prejudice against any group may join with others in taunting or openly rejecting children, fearful of being left out if they do not go along with the crowd. We adults may consider this cowardly, believe the boy or girl should resist these unfair practices. But it is asking a lot of a teen-ager to expect him to take a lone stand. If a wise adult were present to give support to those who don't like to ignore or reject others on a prejudiced basis, many teen-agers would be relieved and ready to resist the pressures which often come from one or two unhappy persons. Recent studies show that the individuals who exhibit these anti-social, prejudiced traits are usually rigid and insecure personalities.

Teen-agers should be able to discriminate in their judgments and acceptance of others, but on the basis of what individuals do or fail to do as persons, not because they happen to be members of a group. Sometimes our efforts to prevent these group prejudices appear as pleas to refrain from all evaluations of others, as if we expected our children to accept anything others do. Adolescents need help in learning to discriminate wisely.

The peer group can be a *democratic* group that gives everyone a chance to show he is a "good guy." It can foster loyalty, courage, sportsmanship. It can provide the opportunities boys and girls need in order to learn to live with their agemates, the generation with whom they will later marry, work, and play, as citizens and members of their community. Thus all over the country we find peer groups developing teen-agers' potentialities for wholesome, sane living—as in the 4-H Clubs in rural areas, the groups in social centers and schools, the

interest clubs and friendship groups fostered by various youth organizations.

Probably most important, and what most of us forget in our serious armchair discussions of peer groups, is that they provide what adolescents want—namely, “fun.” Peer groups are where the child or the adolescent has a good time! They become more important as outlets for fun and gaiety when children or adolescents *don't find fun anywhere else*—and we mean “fun” in a good sense: jokes, laughter, silliness, games, parties, sports, doing things together. The adolescent who finds that everything he says or thinks or does is criticized, opposed, or ridiculed at home may find in the peer group that others like him, accept what he says without dispute, encourage him to “do his stuff,” and in general provide welcoming, reassuring company. In offering these much needed opportunities to escape from family scrutiny and demands, the peer group helps the adolescent to discover himself, to try out the new roles he must learn, along with other boys and girls who are more or less equally inexperienced. Often a boy or girl coming from a loving but critical family of high standards finds for the first time what it is to be admired and accepted as a person.

The pull toward contemporaries, the need for group activities and the need to be part of a group, explains *why the teen-ager's peers are important*, just as our adult peers are important to us and affect our behavior. Keep an adolescent away from his friends for a week, and you will discover how bored he can get with only adult society. When understanding adults, good teachers, or group leaders are at hand, the peer group is a valuable, positive challenge and aid to boys and girls. The group works out its values in terms of relationships: fairness and unfairness, priggishness or good sportsmanship, successful behavior or unsuccessful attempts to win approval. The peer group, in other words, puts its pressure on each child to give up childish behavior or over-adult behavior, or constant aggressive behavior, and to learn to act as a social being. It “trims him to size,” so to speak, so that he can and will live and work with others. This is, we may note, a positive, necessary aid to growing up. The peer group also may help the child to escape from many destructive feelings or desires he may have. He learns not to demand of his own agemates what he expects or demands from parents and brothers and sisters. This self-limiting is especially important and helpful in adolescence.

THE NEGATIVE SIDE

But when there are no adults to guide such groups and help them with their expectations and values—especially today, when values are not taken for granted—the peer group may provide something children seek, but it may do so in ways that are not constructive, indeed in ways that handicap and stunt the maturation of the adolescent boy or girl by keeping him juvenile and irresponsible, or by fostering indifference to anything but the group and its plans. The peer group echoes the standards of the larger adult world. In earlier times it was often more stable than it is today. For example, Mark Twain's picture of young people shows a group far different from those of modern times.

Parents must be quite clear about the dual or reciprocal situation: the boy's (or girl's) *need* for his group to pattern his behavior, and the group's need for good, helpful, understanding guidance from schools, community groups, church groups. We need adults who can give the peer group an image of "good" goals and can let it work for such goals. You cannot expect to do all this at home by yourself for your child alone. We cannot hope to do in the adolescent years what we have done earlier for our children. We need the assistance of school groups and community groups, and we should support and strengthen them.

At this point many parents will ask, "Does my child have to do all the silly, crazy things the others do? Must my child conform to these vulgar fads and senseless antics? Must she dress and speak and act like a hoyden, and also submit to these dating and rating practices? Am I expected to approve the drinking, petting, and late hours of this so-called peer group and calmly expose my daughter to the wolves?" These often indignant protests cannot be ignored or waved aside with the plea that every boy and girl must learn to get along with his age group and do what the others do. They are valid objections to the current teen-age patterns in many communities where, let it be noted, the parents have largely abdicated, either feeling helpless or being too busy with their own social life and personal affairs to do anything but scold, threaten, and berate their adolescent sons and daughters.

But before we denounce "flaming youth" and deplore its seeming lack of standards we should recognize that many adolescents are being victimized by the patterns of the peer group and would welcome some plan or program that would

protect them from these group compulsions, which they individually cannot challenge or ignore. It is not fair, nor is it desirable, to ask an adolescent to withdraw or reject his or her age group. Often parental interference with the teen-ager's legitimate desire to be with the age group operates adversely: it deprives the adolescent of experiences essential to his maturation as a young man or woman; it may rob him of self-confidence and of capacity for getting along with his contemporaries. No boy or girl can learn the many complicated lessons for adult living in isolation or by following the advice and teachings, no matter how well-intentioned, of parents whose knowledge of adolescence in these rapidly changing times is out of date. So often, especially when we talk about this situation, we forget that adults really can interrupt this vicious circle *in constructive ways*. When we give adolescents freedom, we can still, as adults, say that we have some ethical ideals for grown-up society which we expect our children to share with us. We can also encourage groups of adolescents to develop activities they can enjoy.

When teen-agers feel it is safe to talk, it is astonishing how often they voice strong criticisms of what they are doing, what they feel they are compelled to do. They say that they can see no way to escape from the pattern. Girls especially often have difficult conflicts: they want to be admired, to have dates, to be popular with their crowd, but they may hate what that involves—drinking and petting, especially with boys they do not really like but who are the most popular and so must be accepted in order to maintain their standing in the “dating complex.” Here we see a self-perpetuating process, and apparently many boys who are not “wolves” feel they are caught in it and see no way to escape.

While there are no quick and easy answers or simple formulas for parents, a clearer recognition of this situation and an honest acceptance of the importance of group experiences for all adolescents may focus parental concern into some effective actions in their own communities. Where parents have conferred together, asked the advice of teachers and youth leaders, and—not the least important—have invited young people to make suggestions and comments, they have been able to provide many needed facilities for constructive youthful activities.

We want to add a word of caution here. While in this and other chapters we speak of the importance of the peer group, or the adolescent's need for good adults beyond home, we

are not suggesting that adolescents should be made to join groups they do not like, nor that they should be forced into sociability whether they like it or not. Nor are we proposing that, in case of problems, you just turn the youth over to an outsider.

The young adolescent, especially, enjoys doing things with others—skating, bicycling, scouting, giving “plays,” running a model railroad, making a magazine, dressmaking, etc., all are more fun in teams or groups. Young people who cannot be part of such activities often lose out in skills as well as in social maturity. Nevertheless, the privacy of individual work and the feeling of acceptance which an adolescent’s home alone can give still stand supremely important; peer group is not a substitute for home but an extension of the boy’s or girl’s activities into the world of which he is becoming a member.

THE “BEST FRIEND”

The individual friendships he forms are “life-savers” to the adolescent. The “best friend” is a protector against loneliness in a crowd, and a strengthening person for each boy and girl. When you have a friend you can believe more fully in yourself because your friend helps you to be the kind of person you want to be.

The best friend is the adolescent’s confidant and consoler. While parents or other adults may be understanding, kind, sympathetic, the friend knows just the measure of sympathy needed. He knows himself how important the group can be and what it demands. In many, many instances a friend is the support a child needs for maintaining, holding on to some standards and goals.

This one saving relationship in early adolescence is just the one parents often interfere with. We should remember that such interference may be extremely damaging to a young person. Hurting a friendship, or maligning a child’s friends, is almost like hurting the child himself; as a matter of fact, sometimes the child feels the hurt more deeply than if he himself were attacked.

This is one specific instance where parents should realize that they can help adolescents. For, while you cannot force a group to accept your child, or make them admit he is “good,” you can always accept your child’s friends. That is one way of demonstrating faith in your own child and in his choices.

LIFE TASKS: DISCOVERING THE MASCULINE AND FEMININE ROLES

Every society has certain patterns of acting, thinking, feeling, which are considered appropriate for the male and for the female. "Maleness" and "femaleness" are, of course, biologically different. But masculinity and femininity are cultural, standards that the traditions of a group define and expect that males and females will conform to, not only in their relations to each other, but in almost all their activities. Indeed, there are few areas of life in which there are not distinct patterns for how men should act and how women should act—even when there seems to be no good reason for the difference.

During childhood boys and girls are gradually introduced to these differences. They wear their hair in different ways; they dress at least somewhat differently; they use the toilet differently. And from early years parents and others tell the little boy and the little girl what they should do to be masculine or feminine. Often children are made to feel quite troubled lest they fail to meet these standards—the boy is warned not to be a sissy and the girl told not to be a tomboy. The distinction is continually emphasized, not only in what adult men and women do, but in the way boys and girls are treated.

During the school years the distinction between masculine and feminine is maintained and gradually enlarged, despite considerable sharing of the same activities. By about nine or ten boys and girls have separated—as is pointed out earlier in this book—and from then on they become increasingly aware of their membership in one or the other of these basic groupings. At puberty, when their genitals and sexual functions begin to mature and their bodies develop in the usual patterns of the two sexes, they face the inescapable fact that they are males or females, and each must now develop all the patterns appropriate to his or her sex.

Some adolescents may have more than normal difficulty in accepting their own sex, but the number and variety of such conflicts cannot be reviewed here. In this discussion we should try to understand how confusing and difficult it frequently is for normal boys and girls to cope effectively with this important life task, especially today, when the long-accepted roles for men and women are becoming less well defined. The young people of today cannot rely upon what their grandparents, or even their parents, did. They live in different

kinds of homes, bear and rear children in changed circumstances, and, above all, they must try to develop new ways of living as men and women. There are many signs of change as men accept an increasing share in homemaking and child care, and women enlarge their interests and participate in many areas formerly limited to men, and there are few or no dependable guides like the old-fashioned codes of what to do and not to do.

Studies of adolescents, plus the records of many agencies, show how young men and women are baffled by this situation. Central in their troubled thinking is the question of the place, meaning, and use of sex—how human sexuality differs from animal mating; how males differ from females in sex interest, desires, and responsiveness. Adolescents are puzzled and anxious—and, let us be honest, so are many adults.

SEX INTERESTS AND EXPERIMENTATION

Probably every generation of adolescents has been curious and has wished for some actual experience with the other sex. But within the past forty-odd years adolescents have found many new opportunities for a variety of sexually stimulating experiences and for sexual intercourse. Faced with these possibilities, parents may act in a number of ways that are expressive of their own personal beliefs and feelings. Often they rely upon the familiar patterns of stern warnings and threats of dire punishment. They may try to create or revive feelings of guilt about anything associated with sex or try to shame the boy or girl as they have in the past. They may argue or plead, or they may pretend they don't care, leaving it to the adolescent to find his way without parental guidance.

What is offered here is not to be taken as a pronouncement or as an argument for or against what the reader believes. We can only point out that at this time in their lives boys and girls are very confused by their own impulses, and by our conflicting traditions and teachings; they are genuinely perplexed. Being inexperienced sexually, they do not know how susceptible they may be to sexual stimulation, and are often carried away by it. Girls especially do not realize that a female may be so sensitive to the male approach that she is not only greatly excited but may be insistent upon the boy's continuing, even when he may be more hesitant or prudent. Beginning adult sexual experience in the teens,

when marriage, in our society, is many years ahead, creates innumerable personal and social problems.

In trying to orient adolescents today we are discovering that the heavy hand of parental authority carries little weight, especially when we rely upon threats and sanctions, invoking codes that may no longer have the meaning for young people that they once did. We are realizing that it is often more fruitful to talk to young people about what they want, what they hope to be, what images of themselves they cherish. Then they can consider their actions in terms of what they do not only to other people but to themselves, to their own dignity and worth. This approach also offers possibilities for discussion of long-term goals, and boys and girls begin to see that what we call values are not verbal abstractions but criteria for dealing with the immediate in terms of future expectations. For instance, a mother who has a wholesome, healthy attitude toward life and marriage can wisely replace the familiar mother-daughter relationship and talk to her daughter as one woman to another. Girls need to be reminded that their worth, their status and desirability in the eyes of young men, are governed not by their easy compliance but by their own self-esteem.

We cannot ignore the changed situation today, when our teen-agers are meeting with boys and girls of such different backgrounds and traditions that they have little or no common basis of expectations or even of social relations, and their attitudes and feelings about sex may be completely at variance. Adults, as we have said, can be of most assistance by refraining from moralizing and passing judgments and by trying to listen, to understand what girls and boys are trying to say—if they will trust us with their confidences. But this does not mean that parents should not state their own personal beliefs and standards so that the adolescent knows that they do have some convictions.

We give "sex education" to young children, and what is it? A story of Mother, Daddy, *and child*. The child sees the story as one of love that resulted in his birth. He sees it not as Mother's and Daddy's affair but as a family picture, with himself as the center of it.

Next we give "sex education" to the prepubertal boy or girl. Now these facts relate more directly to the child's own future marriage. He is not interested in Mother's and Daddy's sexual relations or in their having babies. He is probably disturbed when they try to give him a picture of adult sexual mating. That is not his concern, nor should it be. If he be-

comes aware of unhappiness between adults, he may be upset or disgusted. Sexual life ahead is usually still tied to marriage, love, and babies.

Then come the pubertal and postpubertal stages of development. Feelings, impulses arise in him which are new and disturbing. Now he suddenly realizes the full personal impact of the story of sex.

In other words, sex education for children means a different thing at each stage of their development, and it must be given in terms of the child's own life, his family and friends. "Facts of life" are facts, more or less, at an early age; they are "feelings of life" later on.

When adolescents reach puberty they realize that sex or mating is *not* just the story of an act of Mommy's and Daddy's, which produced Baby. It is the story of physical attraction between men and women—and physical relationships that may result in procreation. Now they are not interested in the baby angle so much as in themselves, in their fantasies, in their new feelings and approaches to one another. You can see, then, that "facts" about intercourse or procreation finally fit into a total picture for the girl and boy.

It is important for parents to understand that the entire personality, the whole past history of a child's feelings and associations with his body, with his capacities, with his ability and his worth, enter into his feelings about his sex and his approach to the opposite sex. An adolescent girl who has been told that bodies are nasty, that body functions are dirty, and who has tried to maintain tight disciplined control, may be devastated at the thought of accepting a sexual approach, of bearing babies, and a lifetime of being a wife and mother may be a continually degrading experience for her.

For "good" sex education, in its true sense, the adolescent should get the feeling that his developing sexual impulses are universal, not "different" or wrong, though they may bother him and cause conflict and uncertainty. He should understand that they are the beginnings of his growing maleness—or femaleness—which results in mating, and which is a deep, biological part of love relationships. But he should also realize that these early physical changes do not mean maturity or the full development of capacity for love; they are a very precious part of the growing process, not to be separated from the past or the future.

In helping our adolescents to prepare for adult sexual experience, we should also remember that man-woman rela-

tionships demand love, giving, understanding. They demand mutual respect and consideration of each partner's needs and feelings. They demand a mutual acceptance and respect for the body and its functions sexually and in marriage. They also demand responsibility on both sides in understanding that sexual relations involve feeling, before and after; that they cannot be pulled out of context, out of the total picture of life, or love.

Much of this is new in terms of women and girls and their part in marriage. The familiar picture of women fearing mates, or pretending sex doesn't exist, or setting it aside as a loathsome necessity in marriage, is still with us today. But women have sexual feelings, too; they can hope for fulfillment and happiness in marriage. They can "know the score" before marriage and not enter into that state with eyes closed. They can accept men not as "beasts" but as partners whose sexuality, too, is not wrong or bestial.

Suppose, however, that your son or daughter has been given as good a sex education as you can provide. He is constantly thrown together with other boys and girls, some of whom come from homes upset by unhappy marriages. He cannot help noticing instances of sexual confusion and unhappiness among adults outside the home. How can he maintain his individuality and his standards and his feeling of being worth while? What can parents depend on, besides their own words?

First, parents can trust themselves and the respect they give their children. By accepting the child as he grows, in every stage of development, and by *not* tagging "bad" to behavior that belongs to growth itself, they offer him the expectation that he will become a responsible individual.

Second, parents should realize the value of the boy's or girl's friends. The age group is a regulating group and adjusts, at its level, to what society expects. A good group with good leadership is a gradual means of transforming the young child's behavior into more mature social behavior. In schools or communities where such groups have good adult guidance, you have the best way of giving adolescents scope *at their level* to develop and to understand members of the opposite sex.

Third, you have to trust and let your child trust the adults outside the home who like young people, who are kind but also have certain values and expectations for themselves and for children. You have to work for good guidance personnel

in your schools—people who know children, who can talk to them, and who can recognize their behavior as normal or disturbed.

The “good” group leader knows that the one most valuable guide for an adolescent is the adult who believes in him as a person, in his strivings. Today, also, the leader needs to voice his own firm beliefs in ethical standards, for there is often an unseen worry among adolescents that the “good” people, the kind people, are weak, and that they do not offer enough hope for a future society.

We remind parents of the importance of good teachers and youth-group leaders because so often parents work at odds with the adults outside home. They question policies of education that try to include the social living of boys and girls and to understand the problems which adolescents have. The “good” leaders are essential today. In small numbers, they are trying to take the place of the many, many adults who were once the friends of young people: the neighbors, the grandparents, the relatives, the big sisters and big brothers of neighbors, the adult friends who knew you from childhood and thought you were all right.

Good teachers and guidance personnel really are the parents’ best friends, but they need to know that parents believe in them—because they too are helpless unless parents understand children *as they are*, in terms of their development and of their strivings for acceptance.

THE GIRL’S LIFE GOAL: TO MARRY AND BE A MOTHER

Once upon a time the little girl knew that her job in life was to be a mother and homemaker. Big girls and their mothers, as you know if you’ve read Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, may have realized that finding a man to marry, and marriage itself, were jobs involving very elaborate and complicated social roles—but they were necessary, expected goals. The young girl’s task—with the help of her parents—was to find a husband and have a family of her own.

This task, of course, imposed many psychological burdens on the “ugly duckling,” and on the girl who wanted to make her own choice of a husband; and some young women married men who ignored their personalities and disregarded their hopes and wishes. Probably no woman today would want to return to the days when she was assigned a role in

life from her earliest years. Most modern women feel it was very unjust that woman should have been considered only as the helpmate of man, subject to his will.

Yet while yesterday's adult woman may have paid a high price for security, we might say that the *adolescent* girl of yesterday was more sure of what society expected of her, and therefore perhaps relatively more secure in knowing what she could and would do in life than is the girl of today. The little girl knew at just what age she would pin up her hair, lengthen her skirts, and take on the social duties preparatory to becoming a wife.

Our daughters today may enjoy as much education, as much freedom of choice in the election booth and in marriage, as do their brothers. Some of them may enjoy the same privileges of staying out late, driving cars, drinking, and smoking, as do the young men with whom they date. The modern girl still expects that she will be a wife and mother, but she wants to marry "Mr. Right," the man of her own choice. At the same time she expects that she will have a job or career, either for self-support or for independence. She is often expected to get a job immediately after high school or college, and she may plan, as many young girls do today, to work after she is married. As early as beginning high-school days, then, many young girls are thinking and worrying about what they "want to be," what they can do, whether they could be successful at one kind of work or another.

Whether she says so or not, the girl also looks forward, if not specifically to motherhood, at least to finding someone whom she loves and who will love her. But today she is uncertain as to what kind of woman he may want. In her earlier days, perhaps, her mother seemed the ideal woman, but now, although she does not necessarily reject her mother as a mother, she is confronted with the idea of the "glamour girl." She reads advertisements that say she must have soft hands, glowing hair, good-looking legs, a trim figure, smooth skin, smart clothes, to gain and keep the love she wants. At the same time, she knows that her husband-to-be may expect her to manage a complicated household, entertain, handle the budget, bear children, and rear them with intelligence and understanding.

Therefore, the fact that there are no longer absolute standards for female deportment and dress often means bafflement for the young girl. She is not sure of what femininity involves today—and maybe that unsureness is, in itself, part

of her essential femininity. She still asks herself, "What will *he* like, and what can I do to make him like *me*?"

In early adolescence a girl realizes that she will have to face her own future by herself. Sometimes deep depression is a signal of her feelings. Like the moment in maturity when the vision of old age suddenly hits us with full impact, so the time when she realizes her own aloneness, her own responsibility for her life career, comes upon the young girl with sudden, overwhelming force. Unresolved doubts and fears, disturbances from very early days, come to the surface. It is as if a churning process were at work; old fears and deep anxieties are once more stirred up and bring a sense of helplessness.

She may resent the woman's role in store for her if it makes her feel even more helpless. She may be afraid of it, if she has a picture of men as terrifying people. Though part of her family, living at home, she may feel alone and set apart. The world ahead seems a mass of demands, restrictions, and tasks, forcing her into its mold. Satisfactory experiences, day by day, with boys, girls, and other adults, if they are provided, will soon give her a sense of proportion about life. But for the time the realization of her future tasks throws her back, reawakens echoes of her early childhood, when she was trying to find herself in her family.

Furthermore, many girls today go to college or take several years of training after high school. There is a long stretch of years during which they are neither children nor women—still dependent upon their parents for support, yet wanting to be independent and make their own decisions. During this time it is not surprising that girls are often indignant at parental advice about what to wear, when to go to bed, what friends to choose, and questions about what they did and where they went the night before. Though these questions and advice seem understandable to parents, let us remember how often in the past we've told the young girl to be a grown up, to act her age, to be independent. Consider the number of years we've lauded her for resourcefulness and for being responsible for her own affairs. In her late teens she is trying to be independent, to set her own goals, to live her own life, and she chafes at our reminders of her childhood, our continued advice and admonishings. As we saw in Chapter 3, "grown-upness" often, and quite normally, produces mother-daughter conflict.

During adolescence the girl's body reaches sexual maturity, and not the least of her worries is her perplexity about

the role she should play—now, at adolescence. Even assuming she likes being a woman, looks forward to being a wife and mother, has no quarrel with her own femaleness and no resentment of males, she is still presented with the problem of “What do you do about sex?” With almost no direct guidance from the adult world, except perhaps some sex “facts” or classes in hygiene, or maybe stern admonishings not to let a boy touch her, she must work out for herself the tentative answers to questions about man-woman relationships.

In her fantasies and daydreams, and in long talks with her girl friends, she may wonder about or discuss the act of intercourse itself. It is interesting that, although a girl may have known since early childhood how babies are born, still, at adolescence, she experiences a new kind of awareness, an almost startling realization that this biological process she has learned about is something more than science—it is the culmination of the whole love relationship between men and women. More specifically, it is the love relationship between *one* man and *one* woman. At adolescence each girl is concerned with the sexual side of love—not in general, but in specific terms. So we may find that girls discuss all the aspects of sexual feeling and read about it in as many books and magazines as they can get hold of—usually books adults have forbidden them. They want to find out all they can about everything that pertains to intercourse, to the physiology of the male and female, to every word and gesture that accompanies mating and sexual relations.

We cannot consider this curiosity in any way perverted or “dirty.” The girl wants to find out about something that relates to the most important aspect of her life—falling in love, marriage, love-making. Though she may intellectually *know* the processes involved, she has not actually any genuine understanding of what love-making and intercourse involve or how to feel about them. And, since she has grown up to believe that her body parts are very private, very personal possessions, no matter how well balanced she is the idea of sexual intercourse may be somewhat disturbing.

Occasionally a girl becomes “boy crazy,” as the old expression puts it—almost completely obsessed with her relationships to boys, contriving continually to attract their attention. This intensive concern may have little or no sexual element. It arises in many cases from a deep distrust of self, the girl’s profound lack of confidence in her femininity. She seeks to allay these feelings by evoking continual re-

sponses from boys. Indeed it appears that many of the activities of girls that disturb parents are primarily expressions of this acute need to find acceptance, to win approval, to gain some attention from those whose interest will give reassurance. In some cases girls are prepared to pay any price for masculine attention, and their misconduct, especially in sexual behavior, is usually not understood as essentially a desperate need to be liked and approved.

To sum up, girls today have many choices to make in electing life careers as well as in looking forward to marriage. So there is, as there is for the boy, an especial need for several things: (a) responsibility, which can develop if we give girls opportunities in pre-adolescence to pursue interests, to meet other young people and work with them, to learn the consequences of their own acts where that will be a help to them rather than a tragedy; (b) a new kind of relationship to parents that makes some demands on the adolescents as well as giving them a chance for doing independent jobs of their own; (c) a chance to reject what they feel is not wise for them.

Many girls and boys are often in the position of having to accept everything their group does in order to be part of it. They need to know they can reject people or acts which they do not feel are wise. They may need to feel it is all right to be alone at times, not to like all the parties or the party behavior.

Further, both girls and boys need a chance to express their own convictions—which may be practiced in a negative way at home, but which is important in making choices; and parents who can set limits, especially for the young adolescent, and state why those limits are important—even when they earn rebellion.

THE BOY'S LIFE GOAL: TO BE "MASCULINE," TO MARRY AND TAKE A FATHER'S ROLE

Before we look at the boy's life goal we have to ask: What is the traditionally "masculine" role in our society? Immediately we see that there are two parts to the answer. "Masculine" seems to mean "big and strong." From the time a little boy gets his first haircut, strength is emphasized; even the slight boy can be "little and tough." Traditionally, as a fighter, a defender, a protector, the male has had to be strong and prove his strength. But "masculinity" also applies

to the traditional father and means sternness and strict authority; the father is boss as well as protector.

Most of the little boy's growing-up experiences, at home or in his group, accent masculinity as "bigness and strength." Very little of what he does in early childhood is preparation for being a husband and father. As a matter of fact, though marriage and family living are age-old goals, not much attention has been paid to the importance of preparing boys to make these goals positive, happy relationships.

The boy has to "prove" himself constantly from the time he is little. He looks outside himself for recognition of his achievements—to his "gang" or his close friends. Furthermore, traditionally he is expected to be the main support of his future family. So work and achievement mean more to the boy than prestige or high marks *now*. When he feels he has "failed" he senses a threat to his masculinity, to his future role as protector of a family.

A little boy can be very vulnerable also because he is expected to "fight for his rights." This means he must have his defenses ready and be on the lookout for attack. We find, therefore, that a growing boy feels very keenly any deficiency in his physique, or any threat to his strength. And of course he bases his ideas on what adults mean by "strength": boys can enjoy all sorts of school activities and feel "strong" if adults recognize these activities.

As the boy grows up, he must also determine what girls expect of him. Again, traditionally, he must take the lead, as the old-time "beau" did when he wooed his lady. He tries to work for feminine admiration as a masculine personality.

So the boy may have three different and distinct roles to play: that of a husband and father of the future, that of a male with other males, and that of a male with females. Sometimes the three remain entirely separate; sometimes a boy is strong and accepted in his own group of boys, and yet very unsure of himself with females. Very often a boy may be physically unable to meet other boys on the playground—stands aside, or takes interest in less strenuous activities—and may be timid with girls; yet he may become a fine, tender, protective husband and father.

We cannot overrate the strength of the family—and, in this case, the father's place in the family. The father, as we said, is authority in our traditional picture. He may be a harsh authority or a kind one, but his pattern often determines what the boy's future role will be. The father's pattern also determines how a boy feels about other authorities. A

father may be strong *and* "good," kind as well as firm, protective as well as asking for effort from his children—in which case the boy can trust authority and his own future role, can trust in strength that is not just "brute" force or arbitrary authority. The underlying feeling of confidence a father can give his son makes all the difference in the world to a boy's work, his attitude to teachers, to political leaders, to women—and finally to his own children.

Furthermore, when we accent physical strength for boys as "masculinity," or achievement in school as the one way of showing future ability to get a job, we overlook all those other capacities that can enrich the husband-role and the father-role. We must remember that we have to give boys a respect for their own thoughts, ideas, masculine interests, so that they can become wise, understanding "authorities" themselves some day.

Finally, boys need to realize that sexual intercourse is not an aggressive act or exploitation of a female. While woman was for centuries thought to be a "tool" of man, yet man also felt that his sexuality or sexual needs in marriage were bestial and unacceptable to "fine" womanhood. Of course, this wasn't always the case, but certainly from novels, biographies, stories told about our grandparents or their parents, we get the idea that unhappiness in marriage was a two-way proposition: woman held her man at bay as long as she could; he finally demanded his rights and then felt guilty, having degraded his mate.

Now, as we have seen, in the traditional picture man had a protective role as provider for his family and authority over his family. That gave him value in his own eyes and in the eyes of society. But today women have declared their equality, their ability to do jobs men can do, their right to have jobs as well as to be mothers. Many young men feel stripped of the one role left them, the one sign of strength that assured them some value and showed that they were needed as males.

For years we have known many adolescents in various stages of development. We have heard both boys and girls talk about their relations to the opposite sex, their difficulties with dates, and we've wondered whether either the boy or the girl in adolescence realizes the difficulties the other sex faces in growing up. Each young person worries about his own status with the opposite sex; each wishes that the other would have some regard for his feelings. And neither one seems to feel that the opposite sex has to face

approximately the same general problems. It is especially significant to hear the boys declare that they don't want to make every date a petting party, but the girls expect it. And the girls on their side also assert that they hate to have dating a succession of petting parties, but the boys demand it, and they have to comply as part of the unspoken agreement about dates. Apparently both boys and girls are being guided by assumptions that are not valid, but which they believe are coercive—and neither boy nor girl can voice his own desires and preference to the other. Perhaps this mutual defeat is a very frequent source of the confusion all adolescents feel, and the exasperation they so often express.

In his self-doubts, too, the factor of the boy's sexual maturity looms large. While a young girl menstruates at puberty and thus, in at least that definite event, feels that she has achieved a step in sexual maturity, the young boy has no such definite outward manifestation of a step in his maturation. For many years his only test of masculinity may be in the responses of the girls to his attentions—and, alas, often those responses are complicated by the girl's own self-doubts and her defensive devices, which, often unintentionally, destroy the boy's slender self-confidence.

If he comes from a home where the expectation is that he will continue his education through high school and college, there is no definite point along the route, unless he marries, at which he can say, "Now I am a mature man, recognized and accepted as such." In this prolonged time of intellectual learning in high school and college, boys need chances to do jobs they choose themselves. Very often the youngster from an unfavorable financial background, who takes a job to earn his living, may achieve a status which meets the world's test of grown-upness and independence. That, at least, seems to the boy a test of masculinity, if not in sexual terms, at least in terms of earning his own money, proving he can do something on a job in a business world.

The adolescent boy also feels a pressure that is present, no matter how we try to disguise it, in our expectations for his future. More and more, jobs are beginning to require a college education and specialized training after college. More and more, world situations demand an educated and thoughtful public. But this long stretch of years spent in going to college—and perhaps in working while going to college—is taxing on a young man, who may feel unproductive financially and may also rebel against intellectual tasks that do not help him to show his masculinity.

The late adolescent is no more like the young adolescent than you are. He is not the giggly, teasing, awkward twelve-year-old. He wants to be an individual, and the stereotyped "popularity" patterns, the "dating mill," as he calls it, leave him very much disgusted. He wants to be serious about love and find good, honest, thoughtful relationships with other young men and women. He wants some close adult friends and helpers. He wants to set his goals and think about them.

We must keep clearly in mind our value as parents: we can continually help young men and women to see their individual capacities, develop them, and use them with other people. Home must still give the individual the idea that he is unique, that he can grow, that he can help others, in marriage and in his work. *We also have to recognize that adolescents go through stages of psychological growth that change their behavior. We have to see this different behavior as a safeguard in early stages, and as producing a false system of values if it becomes standardized for late adolescents or adults—*just as we must know that a little child's rage is not wicked for his age, but that childish rage in adults is destructive and has to be outlawed in social groups. In the ventures of child-bearing and child-rearing today, men are needed—not only as fathers, but as admiring, supporting, encouraging partners. We want them to be psychologically strong as never before, to believe in themselves, but also to realize that it is not a sign of weakness or failure to have to grope for new patterns in living today.

LIFE TASKS: PROVING ONE'S ADEQUACY AND BECOMING INDEPENDENT

In the list of adolescent life tasks this goal becomes ever more significant as the teen-ager grows older and begins to reach young adulthood. It is the goal parents are often most concerned about when they view adolescence as the period of preparation for serious work.

The adolescent needs to feel that work is *his* goal. One of the ways in which he can say, "I am a person," is to work at a job of his own choosing. Thereby he can prove his adequacy, his competence and responsibility. Perhaps, in thinking about jobs and adolescents, we ought to use the term "workmanship" rather than "work." Think of steps in a process, rather than of the end product. What does the ado-

lescent feel about his own work? What does he expect of himself? What standards can he begin to formulate for himself, not for a future job, but for work right now? To be honest with himself, and to be able to develop a positive attitude of his own to his own work, is far more important than an examination grade for the child or the adolescent.

The work itself, the purpose of the work, the standards you set yourself, become part of your living and your reason for living. Many adolescents go through high school and college, living up to high adult standards in terms of grades, and then suddenly, when academic work is over, have no purpose in life, no reason of their own for working. Other young people stick to one strong interest for years, are "poor" students in high school, and in college do better, more creative work than many of the students with whom they grew up.

The adolescent's task is not so much to work as to integrate his work into his life experiences. He has to feel that it is part of his life, that he must set the pace and standards of accomplishment.

High-school work, college work, jobs outside of school are maturing experiences, not just ways of getting better grades or salaries. They enlarge, or should enlarge, a young person's sense of adequacy. The adolescent, unless already defeated and hopeless, has a tremendous zest for exploring and discovering. He has a new enthusiasm for reshaping the world and feels that he can do it. But confronted with adult goals, adult disparagement, grown-up distrust or grown-up demands, statements about future difficulties, he often loses the enthusiasm and becomes fearful and dispirited.

This may sound contradictory to the point made elsewhere about the adolescent's awareness, his new and sometimes frightening vision of the future. But, with his new awareness, as we have pointed out, there is also a new strength, and there is satisfaction in the adolescent's attempts to stand on his own feet. It is easy to shake this emerging feeling of strength: you can readily make the adolescent doubtful that what he is doing is worth while. Sometimes the parent's own apparent success—academically, financially, socially—shakes the adolescent's faith in himself and his aspirations. Usually it is when the adolescent is "down," has made a mistake or had a setback, that his parents persuade him to accept their ideas, their goals, as best. Not only does this affect his feeling about his work, but there are almost invariably other people and human relations

involved, and what parents may unknowingly attack are the youth's own personal relationships.

In jobs, whether at school or outside of school, the adolescent is working out his own relationship to authority, whether it be to a boss or a teacher. He is also doing a job with co-workers, classmates or employees. Finally, he is sounding out his own abilities, his capacity to take criticism, and to criticize himself. It is very hard for an adolescent to be self-critical, or to meet his tasks with his capacities, when he feels constantly that his parents would do the job far better than he. Sometimes an adolescent is too respectful of parental standards and fearful of not meeting them to tackle a job wholeheartedly, to meet authority on its own terms, or classmates on their level. He may feel that the teacher, for example, or the ideas she presents, are not as important as taking home a high mark. He may be extremely competitive with other boys and girls, or unable to join freely with them in extra-class activities because he is constantly trying to meet the top-notch standards for which his parents have asked. The adolescent's normal competition with the members of his own peer group may seem very hard on the youth. But it is much easier to compete with your own agemates than with a parental standard. One boy who was very close to his father, for example, could never manage to win a tennis game with that parent. The youth could have beaten any member of his class—but Father stood for the best in everything, and the boy, consequently, felt incompetent.

But of course parents cannot maintain a complete hands-off policy in the adolescent years, especially at this time when there is some doubt in the young person's mind as to his effectiveness and capacity. As parents, we are resources for our children. We can help boys and girls ask themselves questions that will clear up some of their confusions. We can offer them insights for going ahead. First, and probably most important, we can help them to realize that they have capacities and that experience is the surest way of developing these capacities. Second, we can show them that mistakes are not failures, and unhappy experiences are not tragedies; rather they give one increasing strength, an ability to learn and mature. We can, moreover, recognize the importance of adolescent interests—jobs outside of school, jobs in school that are not reported with the monthly grade, activities where boys and girls earnestly show their curiosity and zeal for helping others.

We have to realize that life and jobs are not overwhelming-

ly serious. Most people have to earn a living, support or care for families, learn a skill or profession—but unsmiling, unswerving, frowning devotion to a job leaves out a basic human quality in living. We have called this chapter “Life Tasks of Our Adolescent Boys and Girls,” but that does not mean that those tasks have to be laden with distress and worry. There is a great deal of fun in finding out, in pursuing our goals, even in today’s world. There are always other human beings who are enjoyable. A woman may be an excellent cook, but if she’s the irritable, get-out-of-my-kitchen type who makes you feel that she literally *has* worked her fingers to the bone, you’d probably rather sacrifice her cuisine for another’s contentment and laughter.

To the adolescent, however, life is often very serious, and he needs help in realizing that almost everyone meets situations and jobs differently. *His* enthusiasm, *his* satisfaction, *his* living are the things that count. He has to learn to make up his own mind, to meet adults with some ideas of his own to offer, and with a give-and-take relationship that is more than childhood docility. Parents must gradually help him to feel independent, so that he can respond to other people as himself, *as a whole person*, with zest, with humor, with curiosity.

At this point in history, when even little children are looking ahead fearfully to an uncertain future, we need more than ever to emphasize present values and happiness in today’s living. The best preparation for the adolescent lies in helping him to feel that his merit as a human being lies in his ability to face tasks now and every day, in his capacity to tackle a problem, to make mistakes, to learn and live with the people around him. For all their seeming recklessness, the boys and girls who have had trust and respect given them by their parents throughout childhood will have a far more sensitive code of behavior to other people than can be suddenly implanted in adolescents by authoritarian pronouncements or stern cautioning. Having been given the feeling that their lives, their bodies, are worthy of respect, they will almost certainly value other persons.

FINDING A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

As adolescents reach the late teens—especially if they are not prematurely tough—they become concerned about most of the basic problems of human living. They want clear, def-

inite answers to questions that cannot be answered except in terms of beliefs, assumptions, or faith of some kind. They are eager to discuss, to argue and debate, but ordinarily they are not ready to accept adult pronouncements.

In these later adolescent years we see emerging what apparently becomes the individual's design for living—his beliefs and convictions, his level of aspiration, his image of himself that will largely direct his future activities and give whatever purpose and meaning his life will have.

In any group of boys and of girls in the late teens there is a wide range of attitudes and feelings, and there are sometimes strongly voiced convictions (which are not always as firmly believed as they are stated). In "bull sessions" the adolescent's thinking is stirred, and later, when he is alone, he mulls over what he has heard and puzzles about what he himself said under the provocation of others' remarks. As in all other areas, he cannot wholly ignore or deny his own individual feelings. As his questions about life become more difficult for him to resolve, he may be unable to make necessary choices because he cannot make some assumptions upon which to base his decisions. He finds that he can tolerate only a certain degree of uncertainty, can accept only so much that is tentative and open to further speculation. At this point those adolescents who are "hot for certainty," and must have some unquestionable beliefs, look for some principles others will accept, whether they be religious, scientific, or esthetic. Those who can face life with the feeling that they can and must go on seeking new understanding may accept as temporary some set of beliefs, recognizing that they are tentative and can be changed.

Religion, as presented by a church, may have a greater meaning for the late-teen-age adolescent than it does at any other time of his life. He wants to know what kind of universe this is and where he stands in it, what he can believe about human nature and society. These are essentially philosophical or religious questions, which at this time of late adolescence may become vital to the young person.

Adolescents are often aware of the gap or open conflict between people's verbally expressed beliefs and aspirations and what they do and fail to do in their daily lives. A young person may be appalled at adults' selfish acts, their unkindness to other people, their apparent neglect of suffering, their worldliness and materialism. The ponderous slowness adults exhibit in changing their attitudes or habits, the seeming absence in their lives of the personal love and altruism he ex-

pects to find in *his* later years, seem out of keeping with the teaching he has had.

His feeling of loneliness and insecurity is often helped by the idea of a perfect Godlike, all-accepting, all-forgiving love. While the adolescent may not seem to us to exemplify the dignity of man, he desperately needs that feeling of dignity, and he may find it expressed for him in the teaching of religion. His deepest strivings, even the burdensome guilt he feels at times, are often answered and solaced by religious feelings. The magnitude and beauty of the natural world awake in him echoes of nameless feelings that are painful and beautiful, which want expression and seem lost or disregarded by those around him.

An altruistic cause, a crusade, usually appeals to adolescents because they are enthusiastically eager to correct the inequalities they feel so strongly about. As we know, the major danger to the aspiration of most youth is disillusionment. We need their high hopes and their questioning. Thoughtful parents must admit that young people may express the ideals given them in pure form, determined to rekindle those ideals for a new generation. But there is no basis for feeling, as an adult, that because you have given your child values and aspirations throughout his childhood he will conform to your pattern, love you for having given. The sounder the aspirations or ideals given him, the harder he'll search for his own ideals in life, seeming to rebel against you and the things for which you stand.

Some young people can retain the ideals of religion in late adolescence and try to translate them into everyday practice. Many youngsters are unable to bridge this gap, so they may accept as their working philosophy: "Get what you can, it's a dog-eat-dog existence," or "I care for no one, no one cares for me; what's the use?" Or they find an answer in a political ideology that says, "You can discount people and their feelings; you can give up personal aspiration and subjugate yourself to the power of the state." Youth without a belief in the worth of its own feelings is probably as hurtful to itself as it is a threat to a free society, for it has lost what we consider important in our democracy—a belief in the pursuit of happiness and the realization of the precious quality of liberty, which makes that pursuit possible. Let's face it: deeply religious beliefs are the *realization* of love, hope, faith, in human terms, as well as aspirations toward an ideal. We know enough now about people and children to say that children who are loved and helped will develop

values that enable them to be loving and helpful to others. And as parents give these spiritual values to their children, they can also communicate to them the enduring goals that have guided the founding and governing of this nation—the hope, for instance, that our laws can provide maximum protection for every individual.

It is fairly easy to evoke from youngsters in the later elementary grades devotion and admiration for the great men and women whose lifetime efforts forwarded the goals of freedom, justice, equality. Lincoln and Washington are exalted heroes for these children. But it is in the adolescent years, when personal emotional problems are pressing, that we find dawning cynicism about one's own personal worth and that of others. Parents have to realize that there are many urgent human needs unfolding in the adolescent years, needs they may never have discussed with their youngsters—we have disguised or hidden or forgotten our own perplexities, personal and social. We need, in counseling, in schools, but especially in homes, to give more consideration not just to the strivings of *man* but to the searchings, the responses, the feelings of children as they grow into manhood and womanhood.

Spiritual values are not lost in the adolescent years. While for a time young people seem bitter, even under our most hopeful guidance and trust, they do eventually, as they find satisfaction in living in a grown-up world, return to a realization of the values we have given them. The purpose of understanding adolescence and its strivings is not to soothe and placate and make life smooth for ourselves, but rather to help the boy or girl to restate and resolve his life problems constructively and with insight. He may criticize, seem bitter, feel lost, but we adults should have faith and trust on which he can rely and to which he can continually "raise his sights."

While we have spoken of the life tasks of *all* adolescents today, this does not mean that every young person will face them at the same time or with the same intensity. The boy or girl is an individual and approaches these tasks with his own personal feelings; he works through them with the humor or zest of thoughtfulness or wistfulness that are his alone.

What he needs most is to hold on to a belief in this individuality, even when he has to face tasks that are common to all adolescents.

THE FAMILY CIRCUIT

There is no "family" in the abstract. Children grow up in a specific, actual family, made up of parents and brothers and sisters (and, as we note later, sometimes changing parents, because of remarriage after death or divorce). What "family" means, then, to a child is always "*my* family, my parents, my brothers and sisters and relatives." Over the years he establishes his own individualized relationships to them, *and*, let it be emphasized, they develop their relationships to him. These family relationships—how father treats mother and mother treats father or the children, and how brothers and sisters get along together—make up family life for a child, who usually accepts them as the normal patterns.

All through childhood the boy and girl are engaged in this family drama, often puzzled and unhappy over incidents at which they feel aggrieved or resentful. But even in families which to an outsider seem to be lacking in what family living should provide, children find something hard to describe. Their feeling is "it is *my* family." While they may complain and rebel against parental treatment or their brothers and sisters, still they belong in that family, for better or worse. When the family is in difficulties they close ranks and find a new strength in being loyal to one another.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A FAMILY

Families, like people, have a life cycle, moving from the early days of marriage, through the coming of the babies, the busy years of homemaking, child-rearing, and schooling, the period when the children enter adolescence and begin to move out into the larger world, to the "launching stage" when the older children leave home for jobs and marriage; and

then the family is again reduced to a twosome. The time when a child arrives in this life cycle—early, as the firstborn, as in-between, or as the “baby of the family”—may make a lot of difference to the child and to the family.

Frequently we say, “I don’t understand how that child differs so from his brothers and sisters. He grew up in the same family.” But no child ever grows up in the same family. The firstborn comes to two inexperienced, often anxious young parents. The next child comes into a family where mother and father are older, more experienced, have changed attitudes and expectations, and where there is an older child who is never indifferent to this new arrival. So we should recognize that while children live in the same house, share the daily round of meals and routines, each lives in a family of his own, with parents who are always a highly individualized mother and father, toward whom he has his private feelings. We might think of each child growing up in a family as rehearsing his role day after day, either acting out his life or truly “playing a part” to conceal what he feels and desires or fears, always with the parents in the center of the stage, managing the drama. Any good novel of family life portrays this drama in all its complexity. Often we gain real understanding of family living from a novel or play because the author reveals what is going on in each character’s mind, and thus helps us to realize that in personal relationships we are frequently baffled by our inability to communicate, even with those we love the most.

In every home there is an emotional climate, an atmosphere created by the feelings, whether expressed or repressed, of the different members of the household. This emotional climate may be favorable to the personality development of children and to adult fulfillment, or it may be unfavorable, even detrimental. Strangely enough, occasional family blowups, outspoken expression of anger, and equally vigorous communication of love and tenderness, may be wholesome, conducive to good personality development in children. The always even-tempered, carefully controlled family, in which parents never reveal their feelings, speak only with restraint, strive to play the part of cool, detached, objective persons, may be anything but desirable for children and may even be destructive to adolescents.

We are still groping to understand the role of feelings and emotions in human beings. We cannot chart any fixed patterns of emotional reactions in families, for a home situation is seldom simple. The more we discover about the human per-

sonality, the more we must be wary of set formulas or prescriptions. At all events, the child in the family is not able to philosophize and speculate upon the complicated problems that tax the skill of our most highly trained professionals. For the child, his family means a lot of things which he enjoys, tolerates, actively dislikes or hates, and for the child "that's it," and in some ways he may be a better philosopher than his parents.

But we do know that in this family drama living is taking place in its most intense and significant phases for both the parents and the children. The children are the focus of parental concerns, for each child is a unique personality whose entrance into the family marked a significant, often critical, phase in the marriage. Likewise, the parents are the focus of each child's watchful scrutiny, the target of his rapidly shifting love or hatred. Since the parents, as adults, are less likely to alter, they usually continue to maintain much the same relationship to each child, at least up to puberty. But the child, as he grows and matures, of necessity must repeatedly revise his relationships with his parents. These changes in the child, however wholesome and desirable, may prove difficult for the parents, as is shown by their frequent complaints at each transition in the child's behavior. And the child must accept certain constants or persisting elements in regard to his parents—his great dependence upon them, his recognition of their authority, his unceasing need for their reassurance and love, which is essential to his ongoing maturation.

Both parents and children all through childhood are involved in these circular relations that rarely, if ever, are stable for more than a brief time. As the child develops, so he must change himself and, as far as possible, get his parents to change. The parents usually try to keep the home situation unchanged but, growing older and facing the many tasks of adult life, they, too, change, even if they do not always realize it. So parent and child strive, each in different ways, both for change and for stability. The child wants the parents to continue to protect and love him as he grows up, while they want the child to be "good" and accept their parental authority as they go about their adult activities. Needless to say, these two sets of demands or expectations are often at odds during childhood. How they are resolved appears in the emotional climate of the home, which, like any climate, may have good and bad periods, but shows an over-all tendency to be favorable or unfavorable.

HOW THE STAGE IS SET FOR ADOLESCENCE

What occurs during childhood sets the stage, so to speak, for the family drama of adolescence. During these early years each child and his parents have, in innumerable situations, learned their parts, rehearsed them over and over again, with different emotional coloring and altered settings, but often with much the same relations. Then, as we have seen, the child ceases to be a child and begins to develop as a young male or female, seeks to grow up and learn the masculine or feminine role for living in the world outside the home with his or her age group. This sooner or later strains the long-established relations of parents and child; suddenly they face each other almost as strangers because neither can continue the customary part or rely upon the customary expectations of the other. Both are confronted with a situation calling for flexibility and willingness to explore for new and more appropriate relations; yet both parents and adolescents usually revert to the patterns and relations of early childhood.

This seemingly paradoxical and difficult situation becomes more understandable when we remember what is happening. After years during which the adult and the child have more or less reached an equilibrium, stormy at times, but establishing what each will be likely to say and do, they are shocked (and that word is not too strong) at adolescence into a new awareness of each other. The child now appears as an emerging adult, not only with greater height and size, but with very different attitudes toward his parents, and showing all the signs of maturation for which parents are usually unprepared. When the teen-ager begins to "step out" with his group, to become reserved, if not withdrawn, from the family, and inclined to question or challenge parental rules and regulations, he disturbs his parents so that they sometimes react as they did to his early childhood behavior.

At this time, as in many other times of emotional crisis, we may, without realizing it, fall back upon earlier patterns of behavior. Thus at adolescence a child may again feel old childish resentments against parental authority. When faced with parental orders or denials, he may, like the two- or three-year-old, react negatively, become suddenly filled with a sense of injustice, even hatred, for this tyrannical parent who is being mean and coercive just to show he is the boss. And the parent, especially the father, likewise may fall back upon his older role of the stern parent who insisted upon obedience and was able to force it from the little child. The adolescent

may feel he has to fight for his rights against an adult authority that is bent on dominating and defeating him. Parents may feel that their prestige and authority are being challenged by an upstart, whose youth and energy may also make them less self-confident.

What is happening is that both adolescent and parents do not realize that they are entering upon a new phase in their relationship, that they can no longer rely upon their customary roles, nor relive the early days of parent-child relationships. Now is the time when they must consciously strive to mature, giving up old patterns and developing new ones that are appropriate to their development as persons. This is not easy; we seldom realize what we are saying or doing, especially when emotionally aroused. Any emotional disturbance should be a signal to be careful lest we impulsively say or do what we do not mean. This is a time for parents to remember that they have to mature, just as the adolescent must strive to become an adult. That is why we say that adolescence is a period of transition for *both* parents and children, a testing period for their love and loyalty, a time of progress toward a new relationship. This is worth working for, since henceforth parents and adolescents will be living as adults who, if they can cope with this transition constructively, can look forward to many years of friendly, affectionate companionship.

Parents should earnestly try to alter *the way they say or demand things* of the adolescent. If parents can take a new attitude (which will become familiar and comfortable after a while), it will help them to say or do things in a wiser, more understanding fashion. A mother's well-meaning but constant criticism of her daughter's way of walking, talking, figure, or hair-do, the family jokes about daughter's big feet, thinness, large proportions, don't matter very much until the girl approaches puberty. Then suddenly the familiar remarks may be reinforced by new doubts, and daughter remembers and gets very bitter about these earlier comments. Father's open or subtle comparisons between one boy and another in the family may not really begin to rankle until a boy meets with rejection from his boy friends or girl friends. Suddenly all that father says merges with the new slights on his worth, and the boy deeply resents father, brother, and friend.

It is fairly clear that as the adolescent develops new sensitivities these in turn can revive old conflicts and bring them to a head. And here, specifically, we mean family conflicts, for at home the youngster finds the long-established, daily reinforced attitudes about himself which make him a definite

kind of individual. So when young girls or boys rebel against rules, when they show antagonism to brothers and sisters (which seems new), when they become gloomy and depressed over seemingly trifling incidents, if they seem to go all "hay-wire" about one remark at the dinner table, they are not suddenly reacting in a vacuum. Even their rebellion is usually consistent with their past life histories.

Here we would like to enlarge on some of the ideas we touched on in Chapter 1. As we noted there, parents are often bewildered by ideas which reach them from the specialized fields of psychiatry and psychology. In trying to see where they have made mistakes they may use conceptions that have come from professional studies, such as the idea that they have "unconsciously" hurt a child, or that they have "rejected" him. Thus confusion and guilt may increase until parents are afraid of their own words and actions toward the adolescent.

We should like to illustrate for parents, in our own terms, how these ideas may be misconstrued; we should also like to point out what they may mean in terms of parents' actual patterns of living, ways of saying and doing things to the adolescent which are not vague, or in the past, but which operate every day in our response to him.

UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVES

Why do adolescents often have trouble loving and maturing? What happens in the family that interferes with his responses to life? Mainly what happens is that the expression of love to children becomes blocked in some way. A parent, in other words, does not get his love across. Why can't he? Part of the reason is his *pattern of behavior*, what he has seen in his own family, all the action or inaction, demonstration or lack of demonstration of love, which he "inhaled" as he grew. We have to remember that if you love someone it has to be shown in some way; otherwise it just doesn't "make contact."

A second reason for "blocked" love is what the psychoanalyst calls "unconscious motivation." This theory means, for example, that a parent who feels unconsciously a hate (or hostility) for his own parents may (all unbeknownst to himself) show that hostility to his children. Many therapists tell us that often, in treating disturbed children, they find that the child has had the same difficulties, and been treated by

his father or mother in the same way as *that parent* was treated by *his* parents. A mother, for example, may do to her daughter just what was done to her as a child, even though she (the mother) may have disliked or hated her mother for doing those things.

Actually *motives, feelings* may be unconscious, but other people are not unconscious of your behavior. A mother, for example, may have great difficulty in her marriage, or with her children, and finally get some help from a trained therapist. She finds she has been "unconsciously" hostile to her own mother. But, while she may have been unconscious of her own hostility, it is a fairly good bet that other people were not so unconscious of it. In other words, if you took a motion picture and a sound recording of that person for perhaps a period of a week or a month, her feelings actually would show in tone of voice, or in gestures, or in the way she talked to her husband or her neighbor, or in the way she did her work. Putting yourself in the child's or husband's place, you could almost feel the way he felt when she did or said things in that way.

Therefore, while some parents need professional help to find out why they feel as they do, actually they seek that help *in order to be able to alter their behavior, to live more happily, to be able to take and express love in a better way.* As you might guess, this goes for the adolescent, too. *You* may be unconscious of what you do, or what you feel toward others, but there's a very good chance that those closest to you are only too conscious of it and wish, very often, that they could ask you to do it differently.

On the other hand, there are many individuals who are "conscious" of their "unconscious" and yet *don't* alter their behavior and who continue to use behavior that stems from unconscious motives. Example: a man has been psychoanalyzed and now realizes that for years he has been burdened with feelings of hostility to his mother, who had until he was twelve dressed him in Little Lord Fauntleroy fashion so that all the children jeered at him. Now this man has been married for ten years. *Unconsciously* he has acted toward his wife as if she were his mother—being a "big boy" with her (tough, harsh, demanding) and, at the same time, asking her to care for all his needs without meeting her halfway. Naturally she resents his behavior unconsciously, too. But when she shows resentment he unconsciously sees more of Mamma in her, and gets even more angry.

So he now understands how he felt toward his mother—

and what a relief! He feels it's all right now not to feel guilty, not to feel bad, and not to hate himself. *But* does he alter his behavior to his wife? Does he make a conscious effort to understand how she feels? Well, in this story he doesn't. He just goes around looking for unconscious motives for his wife's resentment (which, of course, may also exist, but don't get him or her any further).

Moral of such a tale: two things go hand in hand, understanding and *alteration*, for you and for the adolescent. As parents you can have all the insight in the world, you can hold forth to your friends on their "unconscious mechanisms" and yours, but if you don't express the positive in behavior you're still using the same old "unconscious mechanisms" on your family.

This is why we ask parents to try to alter *the way they demand things of the adolescent*; we ask parents to try to understand what adolescence means today so that they can attain an attitude about their children which helps them state their expectations in a wiser, more understanding fashion. Such rephrasing often helps the parent retain his good image of himself and of his adolescent.

THE REJECTED CHILD

You've heard of the rejected child, unloved by his parents—and the resulting unhappiness. This concept may worry parents. "Did I reject, or didn't I?" Often parents think, for example, that because a baby wasn't "planned" he is, *ispo facto*, a rejected child. That's nonsense. *What you do* (your "whole" behavior) is what voices rejection. Surely not all unplanned babies are rejected and become unhappy adults! But if parents become bitter to each other, let the baby cry for long hours; if they draw away from him—or even if they act helpless and "sad" about his childish behavior—then, as a child, he *may* be rejected, just for being a child. And even then it takes an accumulation of this parental treatment to give a child the feeling of rejection. Often a rejected child is one whose behavior as an infant or a child is not accepted, is considered a bothersome and undesirable part of parents' lives.

Often, as the pre-adolescent matures, parents act helpless and hopeless, making the child feel a rejection they don't mean. If you disapprove of some behavior on a child's part you are not necessarily rejecting a child. Indeed, if you con-

demn some behavior in such a way that the adolescent can keep his own good image of himself, and if when you criticize that behavior you also show acceptance of the "whole" child, then, very probably, you are convincing the adolescent that *he* is not rejected, that only some of his actions are disapproved.

And there is a corollary to this: if the adolescent can reject your ideas, or get mad at you, and if he feels he has fairly good reason for getting mad, then, too, he can feel that he is not rejected.

Again, rejection is expressed in what you do and how you do it. Relax the tone of voice, the demands, the pressures, the tense muscles, and you do something positive. It is silly to spend time trying to make up for what you think was "rejection" in the past. You can't try to give the adolescent the love due a baby. You can't let him squeal and cry like a six-year-old, to make up for old feelings he may have. *That* may very well spell rejection to an adolescent, since you don't seem to expect him to behave like a growing person.

Make the demands of him that are suitable to his age, and give him the leeway and recognition for his age—recognition of his needs in his age group, of his need to learn new behavior, and of his need for emotionally strong, self-respecting human beings. You might recall *what his age-mates do and will demand* as fair play, honesty, tolerance, generosity, and try to make suggestions along those lines. (Not, we might add, along lines of superficial "popularity" or "success." Some parents expect a child to be popular, and so reinforce the "bad" pressures of peers.)

HATE

We hesitate to use the word "hate." In adult living it has connotations so vicious, so distorting, that it really is a nasty word. However, maybe we can try to do some new thinking about old words.

Hate in adult living usually has a fixed and chronic quality, like an illness which has actually altered the *functioning* of an organ-system if not the organ itself. It has become a fixed expression of the total emotional system, part of a *total behavior picture*, in fusing all behavior patterns and altering the whole person.

A feeling of hate in a child, or in the new person of the early adolescent, is more like all the other quick, direct re-

actions of a person—like the instantaneous spitting out of a too hot liquid; like a squeal when a pin pricks, like the way a child almost immediately grabs for a desirable toy taken from him.

When a child says to his parent, "I hate you," it is the "nowness" that is important, the sense of "This moment I feel this way." It is an instant expression of an internal disturbance, an emotional reaction he relieves in words instead of in blows.

Hate, like anger, seems to dissolve if it isn't reinforced, continually provoked, and fixed as chronic hostility. So often we work up a child's feeling by what we do; we respond with "more of the same" anger or rage, and evoke more of the same from the child.

So, like every expression of feeling in behavior, hate or anger can become a persistent pattern of reacting to people, if it is repeatedly provoked. With the adolescent we can avoid arousing anger or hate, and instead try to emphasize the positive. The less we poke at an adolescent's feelings, the more we do the positive things; the more we can give them opportunities to be positive, the better for our children.

LOVE

Love, too, is a word which gets "fixed" in our minds; that is, we tend to think of the feeling and word as a certain amount of a certain thing contained in a certain place. Odd, the way we apply measurements to feelings, taking from the world of objects and dimensions our ideas about an intangible.

Love changes as people change. The love of a husband for a wife is built up, day by day, on memories, acts, words. Love gains new dimensions as we grow. A child's love changes as he changes, since it is built on memory. When he is a little child, love seems to be outside him, love is his parents, and he needs their physical presence to see it and feel it. Then, as he grows, their love fuses into his feelings, becoming part of him. He needs their physical presence less often, and more of their trust and confidence in him.

In the "old days," or in primitive cultures, it seems that parents and society took for granted the idea that love between parents and children was one thing, and love between men and women, courting and marrying, quite another thing. Society seemed to expect both, but independently. Mar-

rying and raising children was not rejecting parents or ceasing to love parents. The older generation took its place (it had a place then) and *not only permitted but asked young people to take theirs!*

However, society usually specified behavior toward parents or older people: respect and honor. It didn't say, "Love them as you did when you were little." It said instead, "This behavior is now expected of an adult son. Do it." Such an expectation took care of the problem of guilt which might arise when one left parents. However, not to sentimentalize everything old, those parents sometimes used their power and authority to govern the adult lives of their children and their children's children, so that, while the "adolescent break" was easier—was, as a matter of fact, an institution—the young marriages may not have given a recognized place to the wife or the husband.

Often our adolescents feel guilty when they know they are growing up and changing, when they realize that a new kind of love is developing, and feel that this new love is displacing the old. Since adolescents today, in smaller families, in families more isolated from other families, are more dependent on parents for love and affection (*and parents are more dependent on them*), they probably will feel guilty at the thought of "deserting" a parent. A son who has been his mother's sole delight and joy may feel that he is hard-hearted when he begins to enjoy other female companionship outside home. In small families we parents don't realize how much we focus our love on children and get our satisfactions from them.

This may be a little confusing, after all we have said about a child's needing love—as he does. We'll try to clarify it by a parallel. A husband loves his wife, and she loves him. However, she may depend on him for the sum total of her happiness. When he goes out the front door in the morning, she feels lonely and depressed. If he doesn't come home, she's miserable. She loves him, yet she depends so much on his presence that she doesn't enjoy herself without him—the household arts, contacts through the day, music, the garden, the canary, or even the new hat, mean little to her. She doesn't have something—maybe it's self-love, or the "good expectations," or enjoyment in being alive; or perhaps she doesn't have the ability to give love and to value other people and things. At any rate, though her husband wants her love, he doesn't want it to become a burden; he doesn't want to feel guilty when she's home alone; he dislikes the feeling

of such binding love. It gives *him* no chance to be depressed or irritable or to have interests—or even thoughts—of his own.

Actually, our general tendency is to devalue mature love. We extoll “being in love,” which is quite a different thing—a state of excitation and “newness,” divorced from love-with-problems, love-with-work, love-with-irritation, love-with-daily-life.

CLIMATE OF OPINION IN THE FAMILY

In every group of people there exists what we call a “climate of opinion.” This climate is not just ideas or ethics of a group, or just tradition alone. It is composed of all these, and added to those *traditional* ideas and ideals are new ideas.

These new ideas, in turn, arise out of (a) experience, (b) new findings or discoveries that come from scientific research, or (c) novels or plays or art.

Sometimes we are unaware that this climate of opinion exists, yet it may bother us so much that we become upset and bewildered or angry, not knowing what causes these feelings. Our attitudes to ourselves and to our children often stem from this climate; the clash between what was considered good parenthood yesterday and what is expected of us today may cause confusion. For example, we are expected not only to be authorities today, but also to be “good” sex partners, good providers, efficient hosts and hostesses. We are asked to accept childrens’ general needs, yet find room for our own interests.

In a very, very subtle way the climate of opinion becomes part of our own lives and our thinking. New ideas and new happenings occur in society. Those ideas or changes are assimilated into our own lives; or perhaps it’s better to say that they *come into our lives* and are often “indigestible” troublemakers.

Take the *possibility* of divorce, the idea that, if marriages are unhappy, they can and should be dissolved. Coming side by side with the feeling we have from childhood, that one is responsible for one’s family and children, divorce is bound to provoke guilt and conflict in a person. Also, when young people marry *with the possibility of divorce* as part of the “climate,” they may have anxieties they didn’t have in older societies. Of course, when those young people come from

stable, lasting marriages, that possibility may be a conscious or intellectual idea, an awareness that divorce exists, but not a personal threat.

The old climate of opinion, the old expectations for what is good in society—traditions, if you please—operate for individual men and women. If a woman breaks from her family and her group to make her own life, she'll feel somewhat guilty. Unconsciously she realizes that it just isn't too "good" in her society to reject and leave her parents. Her humanity creeps in to make her sorry for the "old folks," no matter how valid her reasons for leaving them. She feels, unconsciously, like a cruel person. So she decides to make herself the "best mother ever," or decides to be the "happiest wife ever," or to make her husband the "happiest guy in the world." Then comes a period of ups and downs in her own family, occasional unkindness from her husband, occasional "nastiness" from her child, some days of discontent for herself. Now she feels not only guilty but anxious about whether she truly *is* a good person. More and more she turns to the voice of the past, the *known*, the ideas and values and punishments her mother used in bringing her up. "Mamma was right. I'll try to be good in the way she liked."

How can anyone say we don't want to be good, that we don't want to do what is and has been "good" in society, past and present? How can anyone try to tell us our adolescents don't want to be good? What Mamma and Papa say is "good" almost invariably wins out. That, parents, is how strong we are.

MASCULINE AND FEMININE

There are, we feel, masculine and feminine points of view about life, which we don't often recognize as separate and valid things, that often create conflicts between parents. Or we might say that in the family there are the maternal and the paternal points of view. A mother sees in her growing son or daughter the "baby" he was; she has memories of his earliest dependence and the protection she gave him. Those precious beginnings were something special for her as well as for the child; to ask her to forget them or set them aside is asking her to forget the main part of her life!

A father usually feels the masculine pride of watching his son or daughter grow. A father usually "calls out" for responses, bouncing the baby, provoking smiles or laughter, waiting for the reaction to a new toy, watching for the de-

light of mastery as the child climbs the steps or uses the hammer or repeats a new phrase "for Daddy."

The father's own satisfaction in mastery, in strength, in handling tools or cars, gives him this vicarious satisfaction in his children. Also, since he doesn't have the mother's physical body-link to a child, the father likes to feel that he is, nevertheless, very close, and wants to see himself reflected in what the child does. These early associations with the infant give the father a sense of being a necessary and desirable part of the family, and of his own child. In a way, he almost has to create his relation to the child. So the mother's attitude at that time has an effect on the child-father relationship.

As the child grows, father and mother disagree from time to time on what the son or daughter needs. Mother says "sympathy and protection"; father says "a little more git-up-and-go." And both are right, though often neither parent knows that. Then father gets harsh, and mother hugs her child to her bosom in protection. The boy or girl doesn't know who's right, and, since he may be frightened of father, runs to mother's protection. So we get a vicious circle in the family, with the individually *very necessary* masculine and feminine viewpoints getting distorted and ranged on opposite sides.

We are each a combination of what we have got from a man and a woman, from a father and a mother. They are different, and probably should be different—for, as we said earlier, not only do children need to know who and what *they* are (as men or women), but they need to know it in relation to the opposite sex. Girls look for what men want, and men search for what women like in men.

THE P.T.A. PARENT

Today there are many new ideas about child-rearing in education and psychology. They are discussed in parent meetings, in books and lectures, and they trickle into the family via these channels. However, the majority of those who attend the meetings, read the books, and hear the lectures are women.

So here is what may happen. First, many of the ideas relate to very early childhood—understanding young children, helping them through situations where they cannot help themselves. Fine! Second, women bring the ideas home

and put them into action. Again, all right. But father is ten miles back. He doesn't understand what most of this is about, and often, as far as he can see, it's just plain "sissy." He has to watch his words, *not* scold the child for kicking the chair, and so on. His masculine place is definitely upset, and he becomes anxious or angry.

Also, he feels a distance between himself and the child. He doesn't understand the "woman-stuff," and he can't *do* it; it goes against the grain. With the girl, he may be at ease. He knows how to act as male to female. With the boy, he has his doubts and is, in fact, a trifle disgusted that a son of his must have "all that protection" and does not want to be a man. Father then often retires to a passive position. Especially if he wants to be a good parent, he swallows hard and tags after his wife.

In other societies you may find the reverse of this story to be true. Father dominates, leads the way, and mother and children follow, mother doing what father says it is good to do. Girls and boys may suffer in this picture, too.

Hold on to your places, fathers, and let your women hold theirs. Love and protection are what "make little boys and big boys." But you are right: boys *do* need to do something, and so do the girls. Watch that you don't ask too much, but do keep close to the boy and help him to feel that "he can do it."

THE FAMILY COALITION

Today one of the notions that have seeped into families is the idea of "consistency." You are consistent, says this notion, when you stick to the rule you have made for the child and thereby let him know where he stands, so that he won't be confused about *why* or *when* you make demands. (We say a little humanity, or inconsistency, is often a boon in the family.)

Now, not only does this idea say that *one* parent should be consistent; it says *both* should be! Therefore father and mother go into a huddle about what to do for, or about, the child's behavior. Then both take a firm line, hold out the same "reasons" for a rule or demand. In many cases both parents use the same phraseology: "It's time to turn out the light now; no drink of water"; "You'd better not go out with that person. Father and I feel, etc. etc."; "We want you to act like a gentleman"; "We feel you need to work harder;" and so on.

What's wrong? First, "we" are like a brick wall: "we" are one authority with its mind all made up. There is no recourse to one parent or the other. "We" feel alike, act in unison, have the same ideas about "you." Father and mother, two people, become one voice. Second, "we" are impersonal. "We" have uttered a decision, a conclusion which is not "mine" or "thine," but ours. A child can fight a person, or have a private "mad" against that person. But it's terribly hard to fight a "we" decision.

Remember the "old days"? (Maybe they exist only in this book!) A father took his son aside and said, "Look, son. Your mother is having one of her days. She'll calm down. Just take it easy." Or the mother said to her daughter, "Oh, dear, your father does make such a to-do about nothing. We'd better not bother him this evening." And so children got to understand and have compassion for the weaknesses of individual human beings who were people—their individual parents. Children also learned that the anger or irritation or explosions *were not directed against them* as people. Children learned a flexibility, a way of behaving in specific situations, of considering feelings, too. The charm of Clarence Day's *Life with Father* does not lie in the angry quality of the father, but in the understanding of the children and the mother that the bombastic demands were surface behavior of a human being with frailties and vulnerability.

Therefore we feel that parents ought to be *individual parents*; the father and the mother should make time to be alone with the child, to talk to the child in his own language, to do the things with the child that he does best. Fathers know a lot of things mothers don't know, and vice versa. A father needs to defer to the mother's knowledge and admit that she "knows best" when she may have a better idea, and mothers need to give the fathers' better ideas their place.

Also, both parents need to admit what and when they don't know. The parent coalition often gives a feeling of such wisdom, such careful thinking, that it scares a child about his own reasoning! Each parent is dearer to a child when he is human.

When decisions *do* have to be reached it might be a good idea to give the adolescent a hand in doing the thinking and reaching the decision, showing him that, even when you arrive at a decision, you may not be absolutely sure, but you're doing what you consider the best thing in the circumstances.

Sometimes one parent alone becomes the "parent coalition." Ever and always there may be deference to what "mother

thinks," or "father wants." You'll find a parent, let's say a father, whose work or interests or personality governs the family. The mother continually tells the children to "please regard father's needs, father's time"; "don't disturb your father"; "your father thinks this is best"; "your father will make the decision when he comes home."

Now that may work out all right for some children at some ages, but it's fairly certain that, if there is a child in the family *unlike* daddy, the "father coalition" may make him feel that he is inadequate unless he is like his father or agrees with his father. Such children are continually seeking their mother's admiration for what they do for their father!

We think each father and mother should make his own contacts with the child, supporting the other parent necessarily, having in mind the same *general goals* for the child, but able to talk "man's language" or "woman's language."

Especially as boys and girls approach adolescence, there are some things only one parent can give a child: interpretation of the masculine or feminine role of that parent, for example. *And this does not mean just the sexual role.* A girl may say to her mother about her father, "Daddy is always fussing about my lipstick," or, "Daddy makes me mad. He's always asking me to do just one thing for him that I know he can do himself. Why do I have to?" And the mother may answer, "Well, you know many men don't like *too much* lipstick. They like women to be attractive and smart, but they don't like them to overdo it."

Or the mother may say, "Occasionally it's nice to do something for people—just to make them feel good—if you know they do things for you. If, for example, when you're grown up, your husband brings you flowers occasionally, wouldn't it be nice to 'spoil' him, too, once in a while? Daddy does the things for you that he can do. It won't hurt to do a few things for him." That, after all, is the process of intimate family living, as contrasted with measuring everything you give, including love.

THE FAMILY CIRCUIT

Family relations are like an electrical circuit in which each event is a "follow-up" or a "go-before" of another event—or in which one event or relationship is a perpetual "short circuit." However, the parallel with electricity cannot be used

indefinitely, since human feelings and special and human relations are growing, cumulative, "building-up."

The relationship of a boy or girl to his mother or father is more than the feelings generated by one stage of development. The relationship accumulates as it goes round the family circle. As it accumulates, it also results in new experiences—which, in turn, affect the future relationships in the family. New events and experiences "feed into" the circuit, altering it or increasing the strain.

Or you may think of a mother-child or father-child relationship as being like a tree, growing up and out. It pushes against a rock; its course is diverted; it goes sideways and up. There are continual cold winds from the north, so the branches on that side of the tree are scraggly and bare. It pushes toward the south, with its branches full only on the south side, and so on.

Or think of the way a river's course is deflected and changed. The source of the river, spring floods, the nature of its bed (rocky, sandy, muddy) all have their effects on the continuing course of the river. It follows a wide, shallow route, or it forms a gorge, or it runs through woods which soak up its excess water in spring. And so on. Figures of speech are often inadequate, but a growing thing like a tree or the natural course of a river may illustrate what we mean about *feeling, growing, ever-responding human beings*.

An infant is born to a young couple who are eager for a baby. What are the parents like? Both are fairly happy at this point. The man has a protective feeling for his wife, a sense of masculinity and strength. He has her admiration for his capacities, and he takes charge of the family in a proud manner. The woman loves him; she has found in him someone who allays her anxieties and fears; makes her feel completely protected and loved. She is ready to take care of his needs gladly, adoringly.

So the baby is born. He cries a lot the first few weeks. The mother, timid and anxious, worries. The father steps in and says in his assured way, "Look, let him cry. He has to learn that you're not going to pick him up every time he cries."

The young mother gets somewhat confused. Being tender and protective, not wanting her infant to feel unhappy, she picks him up anyway. The young father resents it. He says to himself unconsciously, "This baby is not one of the nicest specimens I've ever seen. Furthermore, my wife doesn't take what I say as valid. She'd darn well better. Furthermore, I'll show her that that child won't get the better of me, and that

I know something, too." The mother senses this feeling and she resents it. *So she acts toward the child and his needs in terms of the way her husband feels about her and the baby.* For example, she picks up the infant with the attitude, "Poor baby; we're in this together. Your father doesn't understand us."

The child grows. When the father makes a demand it has a touch of resentment and harshness, an "I know best" quality that is not just a *direct response* to the child, but contains also the elements of father's relations to mother.

Mother's attitude, on the other hand, has a touch of protecting the child against father's attitude. Added to that, it has a touch of flouting father. When the child flinches under father's gaze, or has an unhappy time at school, the mother's attitude unconsciously says to father, "See what you've done. Poor child—I know." Mother even gets unconscious satisfaction when the school guidance person tells her that the child shows signs of anxiety, can't work, isn't liked by the other children.

Finally, upon hearing the school verdict and getting mother's ~~int~~erpretation of it, father explodes to the ceiling. Now you can write the ending. Maybe there's a divorce or a near-divorce. Maybe the school gets hold of the mother and father together and talks about the child in terms of what a good person he is, where he shows signs of being unhappy, and says that boys need time with their fathers, strength from their fathers, who will help them believe in themselves, and love and protection from *both* parents.

Mother may get the point. Something from the past comes back, and she begins to think of what her husband meant earlier, what she herself needed as a growing girl, the aches of loneliness she felt in her family. Maybe father remembers his boyhood and his early marriage and suddenly realizes that what he misses is his wife's faith. The boy is a pre-adolescent, just beginning to feel the ambivalence (the two-way tug on feelings) of going out to the world and wanting his parents' love so much while eager to be independent. Both parents may sense the beginnings of loneliness which will thrust itself on them even more later on. There may be a happy ending.

However, you can have all sorts of variations on this story. We like to call it a "circular-accumulative" process. Often you see this process in a rather tragic form in each parent-to-child attitude, where there is a divorce or separation. Father or mother makes up to the child for what *he feels* the

other parent does to the child. Or each parent, in bitterness, acts to the child the way he feels about the other parent. In such cases the child often knows (sometimes at a thinking or feeling level, rather than in actual words) exactly what is going on, and, of course, is jittery and shaky, wishing he didn't have to be the nerve-center through which these feelings are channeled. The child may act to his parents in an irritable, punishing way, not being able to say openly, "Oh, for goodness' sake, let me out of this! Have your battle and treat me as I am. Aren't either of you brave enough to say it openly, to take it and to get together?"

This is why we feel that quarrels *which can be settled*, or open, direct-to-the-child anger from one parent which can clear up easily, leaving no gritty residue, are often infinitely more helpful than the underground circuit where no one becomes happy again. This is also why we think guidance people and therapists would be wise to consider not only the child but the whole family constellation. Let the father and mother each and jointly try to reach a compromise in attitude to the child. So often if one parent finally seeks trained help for herself or himself, the other parent and his attitude continues; only now the other parent feels he has an expert against him as well as his spouse!

As we noted, there can be infinite ramifications of the circuit. Sometimes one parent is a mixed-up, disturbed person who can't see what he is doing to a child. The other parent may become weak and submissive, instead of helping the child, talking to him, holding to his own kind of protection or demands without embittering the child.

THE FAMILY CIRCUIT: MASCULINE AND FEMININE

Often there is trouble in the family circuit even when father loves mother and she loves him. We spoke earlier of the deep ties that are established between fathers and daughters, mothers and sons. We can't avoid these; if we are really feminine we admire the masculine; if we are masculine we can't help loving the feminine in our daughters.

Also, a man or woman can pick a wife or husband who is different from him, who may not like all the things he likes, who doesn't do things the way he does them. So, naturally, he may love the children who do more things the way he does them, like more things the way he likes them, who echo

his ideas, even the phrases he utters. Or, instead, a man may love the child who reflects the person he chose as wife.

So we have a girl who adores her father, wants to be like him in every way, and gets his admiration. Why wouldn't she? It flatters him; she's so feminine that he just can't help loving her and her adoration. Sometimes, as far as he's concerned, her mother's requests of her, to wash the dishes, to be polite, suggestions about the way she does her hair, are—well, maybe not unnecessary, but unimportant. The mother loves her husband, but here, too, there may be on the girl's part a wee bit of flouting mother. Father, being masculine, doesn't see it. Mother does.

This situation may not reach a crisis. Father and mother have enough in common, have enough fun together so that mother doesn't often feel resentful; though she may get the brunt of her daughter's irritability, anger, and rebelliousness. If the mother is a strong, happy person, she doesn't mind this too much. If she is not, if she has doubts about herself, is anxious about her husband's love anyway, then she may become harsh to her daughter, make "digs" at her husband, or, if there is also a boy, may in turn use him as her defense. She showers him with her affection and protection—and you can guess what may happen between son and father, brother and sister. So the circle goes round and round. In adolescence it may come to a head in mother-daughter conflict, father-son conflict, or in the hurts involved when the girl must turn from father and the son from mother. Then there may be a strain on the daughter to continue doing what father (and mother) want her to do—to be like daddy, to choose work like his. Sometimes this strain is extremely difficult for a child to meet, and his love acquires a tinge of anger or bitterness or defeat.

Again we ask parents to be mutual supports. We ask the father, the adoring one, to make demands too, so that he *really is* a parent, and his daughter knows it. Primarily it is unfair to her future husband and to her brothers (and, incidentally, the relationship affects them) to be such a completely adoring male. No other man in the future can ever be so loving and kind to her, as no other woman can (or should be) so completely protecting and undemanding as the adoring mother.

And, finally, mother and father each need, in the pre-adolescence of their children, communication and satisfaction on their own level, a direct approach to each other and an understanding of what the family circuit may be doing

to them! So often the pre-adolescence and adolescence of a child introduce a new "impulse" in the circuit; most events introduce these new impulses. Something happens to father and mother which they don't understand. Like the adolescent, they may think, "Something is wrong with us, with our relationship; it must have been there from the beginning." We say, "The *possibilities* may have been there, but the events are what provoke the reaction."

Look to yourselves for support and understanding, and see the problems as they arise out of living. They don't have to result in unhappiness or rejection for any member of the family. Then you can *consciously* say to yourself, "Look, we must help each other—maybe change some—to avoid these resentments, coalitions, and the 'bump' in the circuit."

THE FAMILY CIRCUIT: PARENTS' PROBLEMS

The family circuit becomes a little more complicated when we add more children, or a grandparent, to the mother-father-child circle. However, the family circuit is always complicated: like the layout for a model railroad, it is an elaborate network of switches, sidings, loops, which play back into the main circle.

If you have a grandparent—let's say the father's mother—in the family, for example, you find that there may be a vast number of "switches" in the circuit, causing different relationships between husband and wife, mother and children, father and children, mother-in-law and mother.

For example, the grandmother is protective of her adult son in little ways. She asks each morning about his health, cautions him about wearing his rubbers, and so on. This irritates him. It also irritates his wife. He and his wife are "at odds" one day; his wife wants him to be a helpmate, let us say about sharing the burden of "neatening up" the house. The wife resents her mother-in-law's constant protectiveness, saying to herself, "He is, after all, an adult; I can't, he knows I can't, be his mother." The husband feels, "She (my wife) demands so much. Why can't she be a little like my mother?" He, in fact, may dislike his mother's continuing protectiveness, but nevertheless he finds it also desirable—easier than having to do his bit in the household. The wife, therefore is partly "licked" in her requests by the protective mother-in-law. As a matter of fact, she is put in the position of being a nag and a scold.

Individually, these are all nice people. Grandmother was a good mother; father and mother are generous, kind people. But, all together, the circuit of relationships provokes resentment.

Then, too, with grandmother in the household it is harder for the wife to give her children directions, suggestions, advice. The wife, put in a position of nagger, doesn't get a full vote of confidence from the household. The husband, protected by grandmother, makes his desires known quite easily. The wife, resenting this too, may also seem to nag the children, or may actually be harsher at times than she really wants to be—showing grandmother, indirectly, that mother *does* have some say in the family.

The grandmother aligns herself with her "favorite" grandchild, perhaps. The mother, resenting it, takes a slightly intolerant attitude to that child. The father, with just a look or a remark (and with grandmother on his side), deprecates what his wife does with the children.

Round and round it goes. The children learn to play the game by swinging from father's side to mother's side, or, sensing the lay of the land, may actually learn just what attitude will hurt one or the other parent's pride.

Again, it is difficult to break the bad circuit. Mother could break it by acting directly to the children as their parent, facing situations as they come, seeing them apart from the domestic circuit. This takes, of course, a mother with belief in herself and an ability to keep her wounded pride out of the mother-children relationships. Father could break such a circuit by being grown-up and retaining his sense of proportion about the importance of his wife's happiness and his children's. This takes a "big boy" who realizes that he cannot ask a mother's protection from his wife. (Incidentally, a grandmother can operate as a factor in the circuit even when she is not physically present.)

THE FAMILY CIRCUIT: BROTHERS AND SISTERS

When there are brothers and sisters you often find a circuit in which, again, one parent responds or reacts to the way the other parent treats one child.

The oldest child, let us say, is very much like his father, and gets mother's full admiration. The second child, a girl, is more like the wife—and gets father's attention. The first child

also wants father's love, just as the second child wants her mother's admiration. Each parent forgets that the other child may be seeking attention he doesn't get! Then, when that child misbehaves, or fights with his brother or sister, and is punished or scolded by a parent whose admiration he seeks, the child becomes resentful or bitter.

Let's say a boy is like his father, wants to be like his father, wants his father's admiration. Mother can't help her devotion and admiration for the boy. But Father scolds and punishes the child, and the boy is devastated by such punishment from the man whose admiration he wants so much. Furthermore, the boy's sister gets adoration from her father without any effort at all! The boy resents it, without actually being aware of his resentment. Meanwhile the girl is at a disadvantage with her mother, who may be impatient or extra demanding with her daughter, or really blind to her needs.

Now, when you get such parental alignments with children, and add mother-father unhappiness or discord, you may also have a circuit of relationships in which the "non-favorite" child gets the brunt of demands, pressure, punishments. Again, one parent is not acting directly toward the child but actually *reacting* to the other parent *through* the child.

Often such parent-child relationships start because of discord between husband and wife. Then the child, seeking the love he wants, acts "mean" or "nasty" or "sulky." Gradually one parent—or both—feels that the child actually *is* nasty and treats him as such. A new event, the child's misbehavior, affects the parents, who then assume a different attitude toward the child.

Again, very often, one parent indirectly says to the other, "This is your fault." Or one parent, winning one child to his side, silently says to the other, "You see, I have an ally who loves me."

As we said earlier, each new event, each person, introduces another impulse into the network of the family circuit. You can have loving parents, good parents, who try to help each child individually, and still find, in a youth's adolescence, that he has been an unsatisfied member who didn't get the attention or love he needed.

You may have, for example, an event, or situation, such as this: One child, because of severe illness, a physical handicap, a mental defect, is given extra attention and help by parents. Another child, healthy and lively, is given less attention because he seems so "well-rounded" and "secure"; at the same

time, more is demanded of him because he is so competent. He sees the brother or sister receiving the "lion's share" of attention. While he understands, intellectually, the reason for it, emotionally he can't help feeling a little resentful. He works hard for status and admiration, while the other child gets them without seeming to work at all!

So the competent or "good" child, who, in his parent's eyes, has no cause for jealousy, may actually never get the "extras" in attention he wants. Differences between children may cause unintended hurt for children, and set in motion in the circuit relationships that have elements of rivalry—though parents are as good as can be! At adolescence a boy or girl may show to a parent or a sibling resentment that seems uncalled for, and often this is a renewed attempt on the youth's part to establish his identity, to be himself and be loved for what he is.

The pull of his own generation and the possibility of turning away from parents can become threatening even to the competent youth. We often find that a family circuit which has been smooth may at adolescence show trouble-spots in rivalry or resentments. Again, we must deal with those as they come, instead of trying to anticipate them. You can say to the adolescent so troubled, "Look, I know you feel resentful of his (or her) position; it's time we faced it and time we told you that we love you because you are you. We want you to be the kind of person you are, and if you'd like to talk about it, you can. It might have seemed earlier that your brother (or sister) was preferred. You need to help us set things straight. You need to state *your* preferences and be a person, too. Maybe it's time you spoke up, told us what you like and dislike. We need your help in this situation (and not, perhaps, sulkiness, or demandingness, or constant irritability)." And you may need to find out what specific help, what kind of "extra" attention, he needs *at his age* for self-assurance.

THE MUTUAL-ADMIRATION CIRCUIT

Adults need support and admiration, too, as is obvious from the defenses we set up, the circuits we set in motion to get them. All of us have many unsolved problems left over from childhood and adolescence, many feelings of ineptitude, incompetence, of being unlovable. Long ago we learned not to "lead with the chin" or "wear the heart on the sleeve." So,

even in marriage, we don't want to expose hurts—or if we feel hurt we defend ourselves.

While parents want their children's love and admiration, they also want each other's, and they go on wanting it. Such admiration and respect are frequently withheld between parents because each feels vulnerable and "misunderstood." We seldom realize just how our children become part of our husband-wife relationship, part of our own unsolved problems—yet they do. Because we are human beings who need love and support—especially when the life-task of rearing children is involved—we seek them, often deviously. When our children seem to hit at our self-esteem, we become doubly hurt and doubly in need of faith from husband or wife.

Each family can be a society for mutual support and admiration when its members, especially parents, realize the needs of their parents and their own needs. We, like adolescents, need to know how constructive or destructive we may be in our intimate relationships, and we can introduce a few new "events" into the circuit to reinforce its positive strength and vitality.

Our own problems may become acute because the mixed behavior of our adolescents makes us feel guilty or resentful. We may need to talk to someone skilled in counseling or therapy to get back the self-image we like, to see why old scores are troubling us and have, perhaps, become more troublesome. We may need to find discussion groups and independent interests which will carry us forward to a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. Every parent needs a friend in his child's adolescence; sometimes the other parent is too bound up in our deep feelings to fill that need. That is the time to go out to others and to learn that we are in a new phase of living which can be deeply fulfilling if we let it be.

THE ELEPHANT STORY

Over and above the valid sex-differences between points of view of parents, there are often clashes of opinion which are not merely differences between masculine and feminine. These clashes have to do with what a parent should expect of a child and what a child should learn to expect of the world. The opinions on these subjects are legion! One parent says of his infant, "My son is going to learn to do things for himself," and the son is taught from infancy to be independent. When he toddles across the room at age one, falls down and

cries, holds out his arms to be picked up, father says, "Come on, get up like a man and walk."

Another parent says, "Children should learn the consequences of their own acts." So his children have a fairly inflexible schedule. At age six, if they are a minute late to dinner—too bad, no dinner. If they have spent their allowances by Monday, no allowance till next Saturday. If, at age ten, they listen ten minutes extra to TV—too bad, no more for a week; and so on.

A third parent says she likes boys to be gentlemen. Her boy, at twelve, most certainly is one—only his boy friends don't seem to care for it! Another mother says, "I want my daughter to have a little *modesty*." And from age two the little girl is warned about exposing herself, or mentioning "private" things, or talking about babies, and so on.

What's wrong? Shouldn't boys and girls learn the consequences of their own acts? Shouldn't girls have a "little modesty"? Shouldn't children be independent? The trouble lies not in the idea, but in when to apply the idea—at what age, what stage of development for which child, and how.

This problem reminds us of the folk tale of the five blind men who inspect an elephant to decide what he is like. One gets hold of the trunk and says, "It's like a large snake." One feels the tail and observes, "It's like a rope." Another finds the elephant's leg and says the animal is like a tree. One strokes the elephant's side and says, "It's like a wall." For the fifth blind man, the tusk is the whole elephant—"It is a sharp-pointed weapon."

In this case, the blind men are parents (in other cases they are practically everybody who stubbornly insists on his point of view instead of looking at the whole!). And the elephant is the child. Sure, he should learn to be independent. Certainly a girl should be modest. And of course we all need to learn the consequences of our own acts!

But we must know how much a child can take and what he is like at a particular age or stage. We must understand why he behaves as he does, why he cannot *yet* take the consequences of all his own acts, why he can't be independent like a grown-up, why rigid modesty for a girl may, at an early stage, be completely confusing and alarming. If you started to give a boy military training at twelve years of age, and he wasn't up to it, you'd terrify him for the future. So it is with other sorts of training.

Adolescents do need to find out the consequences of their acts in the things that will not leave an irreparable mark of

anxiety on their courage, or of guilt on their total effort. If a boy leaves his bike out in the rain, it gets rusty. We can remind him to take it in, suggest ways of cleaning off the rust, and, bit by bit, he "remembers to think" about it.

Much of this responsible kind of thinking is new for the adolescent. A boy of eleven who got a new pair of glasses forgot to take them to school off and on for several weeks. He finally said to his mother, "Remind me to take them. I may say, 'Yes—I *have* them,' but remind me anyhow."

Striking the delicate balance between being "hard-boiled" and soft with adolescents is certainly difficult. But families exist to be flexible, to keep human beings alive and unafraid. Institutions and people outside home are continually reminding the adolescent of the "consequences of his acts." Families can preserve the feeling that most experiences have different possibilities. Our role is to help the adolescent to see the possible consequences in a situation *for him*, to figure them out himself, and gradually to learn the *human factors* involved in every situation—to learn realistically what other people may do or feel about what he does. That is when adolescents really learn to alter their behavior.

The adolescent also (and especially today) has to learn to "stick by his own guns," to find that he has integrity and to believe in it. For this, again, he needs flexible adults who show him that there are ways of saying and doing things which don't necessarily hurt others, but help retain one's own sense of "rightness." Furthermore, the adolescent must learn that "*you can do something to change situations*"—that by holding to one's own integrity, one can and does alter situations for others.

Instead of handing out rules arbitrarily, then, let's, in making our rules, help the adolescent to see the various consequences of his acts to *himself and his goal*.

Adolescents have to learn discrimination and "consequences." But for the adolescent who doesn't see the connection between action and consequence, some episodes may be very hurtful. Therefore, we ask young people to understand that *we* like them, *we* know they're nice people, but that their behavior may confuse others beyond home; thus, though they may not like some rules (and who does?), they may begin to see what they really want to be and do, and perhaps find a better way of going about it.

PARENTS AS PEOPLE

We have stressed some of the dynamics that generate the "home current" of the family circuit. One reason we have done so is to help parents' awareness of the share of family tension that an adolescent may bear, which may be too difficult for him. Another reason is to help a parent look at family difficulties not as just his fault—or the other parent's or the adolescent's fault—but as the result of a circular relationship in which one parent responds to the other and to the adolescent vis-à-vis the other parent, gets the "usual" response from them, and then goes on doing the same things again—round and round.

Above all, we would like parents to see that you can interrupt such a circuit. You can respond to the *real* needs of other people and cut across defenses that are set up for protection of self-esteem. As we noted, therapists say that parents repeat the patterns of *their* parents with their own children. Also, parents continue to repeat their attitudes and behavior to children year after year. When the child comes to adolescence, therefore, and provokes more parental anxiety, a greater sense of loneliness in a parent, more bitterness between parents, you may find that the circuit "blows a fuse" and the parent loses courage and faith in the child.

When we are unsure of ourselves in our marriages, when the child who was a reason for working and living challenges us and seems to reject us, then we, too, like our adolescent, may feel old helplessness again. "Here," we say, "in smithereens, is what I thought was my success and my 'good' reflection."

Today, when the society we respect says it's good to be "good" parents, *we probably feel worse than our parents did at a seeming failure in parenthood*. Again, we have here an example of a different "climate of opinion," which really means changing or expanding insights and values. Why didn't our grandparents (or great-grandparents) feel so guilty and anxious? Nobody ever told them it was good to be a "good" parent. It never occurred to them that they ought to blame themselves because an infant was frightened by an Indian in a wagon-train going westward, or even to blame themselves when a son became a "cad" or a "wastrel," or a daughter went wrong!

But the new idea *has* occurred to us and become widely accepted. We know that parents *do* have an effect for good or ill on their children. And, with that knowledge, we are in

a position of greater vulnerability and greater guilt. The idea has also penetrated to our adolescents, through us and the general atmosphere.

So we have to understand what did happen in an adolescent's past to make him vulnerable, and why he behaves irrationally, or acts angry, or becomes deeply depressed about himself. Then we need to deal with the present and the positive, to see the adolescent's need for a "good" and growing self-image *now*, so the past will not hold its spell of helplessness, loss, rage, or anxiety. We have to help the adolescent see in every situation that he is, and that we expect him to be, a strong, self-respecting, self-propelled individual who is loved and admired; that we expect him to understand and set limits for himself and for others, so that he can live happily with others as he explores new situations.

We must respect ourselves as people—just as we are, as being capable of loving and of being loved. We need to know that there are "oceans" of positive aspects to family life. And we feel strongly that there are tremendous possibilities in your children's adolescence for you and yours to change, to revise the past by giving *in the present* what is needed *in the present*, a sense of self-direction for the adolescent and proof of your own steadfastness and self-respect to him and to other family members.

CHANGING TAKES PRACTICE

You are not like all other parents: you are a separate, individualized personality. The way you punish, demand, or get angry is different even from the way your spouse does. And therefore you cannot try to be a "general" parent, to be angry when you're not, or mild when you're angry. But changing takes a little practice and you do need, consciously, to try some alterations that will help you and your family respect more of "you." For all we've said about honest anger, many's the time an adolescent has wished for a tiny bit of repression in an angry parent—"If only he'd keep it to himself a bit. Why is it that only kids have to control their anger?"

So control isn't bad for you or for the adolescent. It is harmful, though, when you think you are controlling your anger but it is actually squeezing through and showing in another form. Furthermore, parents, like adolescents, can "express" themselves in anger continually and yet not get

rid of the feelings underneath. Let others know what you are angry about. Try to keep your anger clean, direct, and in the present. You don't have to be a new person—just more of the real person you are and want to be.

The old climate of opinion, of course, says nasty things about hypocrisy. If we feel changing is hypocrisy, we may not want to change. But is it hypocrisy if a sign says, "Silence is requested for the benefit of those who have retired"? Or would "Shut up" do better? The first, it seems to us, gives a good reason for quiet, plus the understanding that you, too, when you retire, will reap the benefit of the request.

Is it hypocrisy to consider others, and to act accordingly? In recent years we've begun to feel that, unless we express all our hostility, all our "hates," we're dishonest to ourselves. Living is an art; being a woman or a man is an art. You can call art dishonesty, if you will; you can call it "unnatural." We call it human, as opposed to animal. However, the art of living that is honest and sincere is the best expression of ourselves, the best communication to others. An artist who talks to himself isolates himself and leaves others in the dark. The art of being human is the art of communication.

PARENTS FOR DEMOCRACY

The old climate of opinion and the new have to be resolved in the family. The old climate, as we said earlier, comes mainly from tradition—what has always been done. The new climate arises from new ideas, from what is happening in the world today. The new climate (like a new event in a family) feeds into a circuit, or circular process, and becomes part of our thinking and our action. What is "good" in society today, may not have been "good" in your day, or in your grandparents' day.

This change hits the adolescent who is entering the grown-up world of making decisions. For example, in your day you may have been taught that certain people of the world had "funny" habits, were "queer" and "different." Adolescents today *know* it can't be particularly "good" to think of others as "queer," as "different," or as lesser beings.

Years ago not all men were tyrants with their wives, but most men took it for granted that they had the main say in the family, that their children and wives should not question their authority. Wives and children understood the idea,

too! But today young men know they are not going to be the main authorities in the home. So either they may feel unequal to partnership with women, or they may think, "All right, women. You, too, have to be good sports, do your bit, stop pretending to be angels or weak sisters; we'll go half-way."

Another example: in your day you didn't dare talk back to your parents. It wasn't, as a matter of fact, "good," and you knew it. But today even little children have no sense of sin when they talk back to you. A nine-year-old may tell you about a children's bill of rights!

So you can see how you may get all mixed up about your own children—if you feel they are the ones who are individually "bad" when, as a matter of fact, they are being "good," doing or asking what society says is "good" for a democratic order.

And who would quarrel with the idea that a woman should be a person, not just subservient to a man, or that we must treat all people as people, or that children have rights?

What has happened, then, in our democratic order, is that we have held remnants of traditions which are centuries old, while democracy asks for a new way of behaving.

Slowly the concept of democracy is evolving as an aspiration—a continual striving for a way of living in homes, schools, workshops, public affairs, everywhere that people are engaged in human relations. This way of life we are seeking will recognize that every individual is a person, with worth and dignity which we should respect so that he in turn will be able to respect others and participate in maintaining a free society. This means that what happens in families, what we learn in childhood, is as important for good social life as what we do as citizens in the outside world.

This concept of democracy as a way of life which includes *but is more than* voting and representative government, even more than freedom of action, speech, and belief (precious as these are)—this is the challenging idea we are trying to work out and apply. And we are often handicapped by centuries of tradition based upon authority, domination, submission, passive obedience. It is not easy to learn to be self-disciplined, to accept the burdens of freedom, to act as responsible persons, when we are often perplexed and confused about what is wise and desirable for today's life.

The family reflects democratic society when its members have fun together, respect one another, and are given a voice in policy-making. The clash between "old" and "new" climates

may produce problems: when father's pride is at stake; when mother feels "put upon"; or when parents think that complete dictatorship or permissiveness is the answer. We need a family system and a school system that will more adequately rear children for democratic families in a democratic nation.

And, as parents, we must ask for schools which will accept and extend the democracy of our families, which have wise adults and teachers who know what freedom is, who are "good" authorities, giving children and adolescents the chance to think and explore and talk, so that they, too, can become "good" steadfast authorities who know, deep down in their emotions, what they stand for and why.

PARENTS LOOK AHEAD

As our boys and girls approach and go through the adolescent years, needing less of our physical presence, we are once more presented (as we were before marriage) with the question: "What do we do with our lives?" We have been needed, and we need to be needed. We find that the tasks of child-rearing which filled our whole lives have diminishing returns in terms of closeness to our children and being part of their plans as confidants and advisers.

We discover how much our children contributed to our feelings of being loved and wanted and "good." In families isolated from larger family groups, adolescence brings a new loneliness for parents. Our adolescents' friends are not necessarily (are seldom, as a matter of fact) children of *our* friends. The parents of our adolescents' friends may lead completely different lives, have different interests, and we may never even meet them!

No wonder, then, that parents often try to "hang on" to their adolescents. This "hanging on" is actually the expression of loneliness, of a feeling of not being needed, and of a lack of worthwhile goals in later years. A mother or father may continue to cling to children and try to control their lives because this is the only way he or she knows for feeling useful.

Now that we are living longer than ever before, parents can look forward to some twenty or more years after their youngest child leaves home. For these years of later maturity they can build up a variety of interests and activities, creative

work especially, so that they can use their new-found time and energy for their own individual fulfillments.

It takes a great measure of faith to trust our worth as this "lonely" period approaches, to believe that we have done as good a job as possible and that we have learned a lot in the process. It also takes courage to revise our lives so that we can extend our learning from family living to jobs, to our communities, to groups for other parents' adolescents, to schools for other people's children.

Our parental wisdom has been gained through a most taxing and most rewarding life-career in a family. It should be useful and should be used. It is too precious to be wasted when we so urgently need mature, understanding citizenship in every community.

When the "family circuit" lacks one or more of its contributing members, we realize a loss, not only of the strains, or tensions, but of the energy, the vitality, the "spark" those members added to the circuit and gave to us.

So we may find that we have to put some thought and imagination into revising and renewing the husband-wife circuit, so that we talk to each other, act to each other as adults who have learned something about mistakes and frailties, and who still have precious years to live in communication with each other, without the long-standing, adolescent-type defenses of immaturity. In our youngsters' adolescence we may learn how much of our lives has really been wasted in setting up these defenses—and from our adolescents we may learn how much we need and have needed to find some reflection of our worth in each other.

LIVING WITH THE ADOLESCENT

Every family, as we have seen, is "peculiar" in the sense of being different from any other family, because each member is a unique person with his or her individualized life history, ways of thinking, speaking, acting, and relating himself to others. Today, when neither parents nor children can rely on traditional patterns of conduct, there is likely to be conflict in the family, or smoldering resentments that make family life far from peaceful.

Let us review the family-child conflict areas to find out whether there are ways of revising or reformulating for the adolescent attitudes we may have given him—unintentionally, perhaps—about us, himself, his life, which might brush away some old cobwebs and give him new, more positive attitudes. And let us also consider how we can handle some of the unavoidable differences more constructively.

THE ADOLESCENT'S FRIENDS AND COMPANIONS

When the teen-age boy and girl go out into the world among their agemates, they meet with a variety of others and begin to make friends of both sexes. They are usually excited by these new experiences, especially by recognition from the other sex. But this interest is not connected primarily with any ideas of marriage or sex relations. The "other sex" can be a boy or girl who is provocative, handsome, witty, well dressed, etc., etc. There are all the "fun" aspects of dating, dancing, picnicking, teasing, playing games, just being silly together, which are part of the beginning—rather than the end—of this growing sexual awareness. At this stage boys

and girls have good times with others, of either their own sex or the opposite sex, who bear little resemblance to the people whom they will later associate with or marry.

Solicitous, thoughtful parents may, with the finest motives, want to give their youngsters a healthy, wholesome attitude to sex—for the future—and for that reason may feel deeply upset about the cheapening or “degrading” of sex and love which the teen-age behavior seems to show. But most of these adolescent relationships arise as a way to have everyday fun and are merely preliminary explorations. Children must live through early stages in development to arrive, by experience, at later stages. Parents, therefore, have to expect what seems like looseness or lack of character for a period of time during the early adolescent years. Your boy at thirteen may seem a bawdy, tough, wise-cracking caricature of a detective-story character. Or you may find in the bureau drawers of your formerly well-read little girls a secret cache of “true-love” stories, a stack of “sexy” pictures, homemade or commercial.

Parents are often ready to give a big party for their youngsters, or even to accept the dress-up date, but the informal comings and goings of a friend or two, talk sessions on the sofa, Coke bottles on the mahogany tables, raucous laughter from closed rooms, may provoke parental heat. The very best we can suggest, if school or community *informal* recreation rooms are not available (as they should be), is to allow visits of friends and adopt an attitude of keeping the front door open for afternoon or evening get-togethers. Many parents feel that the place for general adolescent messiness is a summer camp² or a boarding school, but the place for adolescents and any part of their living is at home, too. Many times, especially in the young adolescent years, they don't feel at all inclined to give parties of their own. Sometimes homes are not large enough—or they feel a little shaky about what the group will think about home or parents. (This, by the way, applies to a sumptuous residence as well as to the humble dwelling.)

Often children in this transition stage don't want their parents to see how they act in a large group; they feel silly about acting silly; they might prefer to “drop dead” rather than stand out uncertainly, ill-at-ease, playing host. An impersonal, adult-approved school or youth center or community clubhouse is often the best answer to this problem. *But* most youngsters do have a friend visit them at home occasionally—or want to. They feel greater security, less threat, from the

one best chum or companion. And it is often right there, in that specific relationship, that parents may interfere with the young boy's or girl's privacy.

Remember that when we speak about a child's relationship to his *group*, we are not talking about a deep relationship between individuals; it is, very often, a shifting and insecure relationship. Group popularity is a *temporary and not a lasting status for a child*. With another individual, his best friend or long-standing companion, the child is more secure and may discuss "private" matters. He does very often feel a sense of privacy about some matters, and naturally he should feel that home is the place where he can indulge it.

Now, instead of allowing him the privilege of having his jokes, smutty though they may be, his intimate discussions, or his personal letters, or his messier moments *at home*, we often expose and criticize those aspects of his life unnecessarily and unkindly, and make his private affairs public family property. Often we literally drive him out of the home to less desirable places.

Parents ask, "But if we don't like what the adolescent does, what can we say or do without being destructive?" You can offer to let the youngsters use the living room if they haven't rooms of their own. Knock at a door before you enter. Tell the child beforehand when you're going to do some thorough cleaning; is there anything he wants left alone, and will he (or she) take care of it? You can show your feelings about the jokes you don't like, *acts* you think not too wise, but this does not mean you should give the boy or girl the feeling that he is all bad. Nor need you humiliate him before his best friend with your criticisms and scoldings.

Often, in this phase, parents give the child the attitude that he alone is wicked. Showing dislike for one kind of behavior should not imply that the boy or girl is all-round disgusting. Parents often tell this to the child in their attitudes: they show it by lack of trust, by refusing to accept his interests and his friends, by cracking down hard on rules and punishments, or by giving him no choice in family decisions.

How about the adolescent's comments, which sometimes seem rather indecent? We've heard stories which might curl your hair unless you knew that they were just traditional "fish" stories—not wholly untrue, but very much exaggerated. You can perhaps ask, "What do the other kids think about that?" Or say, "It sounds as though he [or she] is working awfully hard to get attention," rather than, "That brazen

hussy!" or, "If I ever hear that you talk to that boy, or listen to his stories, you can just give up hope of going out nights." It is worse still to pass the information on to the other child's parents. There is no more devastating action than revealing to other parents what you've heard in confidence from your youngsters. If the problem of one girl or boy who is really upsetting must be discussed or resolved, then discuss it with a parent whom you know to be responsible, or with a sympathetic teacher who will respect confidence and try to work out the problem constructively, without unnecessary hurt or shame for the child.

Of course, as we noted earlier, you may be disappointed in discovering that your child—your paragon, whose growth and maturity you admired—seems to have gone down a few notches in maturity, at least as far as sex interest is concerned. If parents could remember to keep on talking to the child as though he were still sane and normal, still interested in science or collections or the outdoors, as if he could still hold a conversation about books, art, music, moving pictures, they would offer respect and understanding without even saying as much.

As in every other aspect of the child's life, if you must really have a serious, heart-to-heart discussion with the adolescent about his friends' behavior, language, or attitudes in your house, don't threaten or shame, or relate it to other areas of living. Old deprivations or threats or even explanations may once have worked, but, in early adolescence especially, they may boomerang. Deprivations or punishments are particularly hurtful to the adolescent because they are, he feels, for children, and they threaten his feeling of being independent, resourceful, master of himself, which he wants to cultivate. Though punishments may seem temporary or mild to you, they are to him an indication of bondage forever.

When we say that trust and respect are essential for the maturing boy and girl, we don't mean that you must give up expecting them to show any responsibility or obligation to the home or the family. But you do have to clear your conversation of the constant, "I told you before . . ." "If I hear that again . . ." "Every time you come in, you . . ." "I want you to understand once and for all that we will not tolerate . . ." The language you use may be far more irritating than the rules implied.

You may not believe it now, but in a few years the smutty talk or crude jokes or silly antics of early teen-agers (like

the pre-school bathroom jokes) will be forgotten by the boy or girl, or at least he will want to forget them. Emphasizing his trespasses now provokes guilt that may be a strong deterrent to the deeper, sounder relationships and friendships of later adolescence and maturity.

Instead of trying to battle with the growing-up process, help it along, work with, not against, the course of maturation. When you realize that children discuss sex occasionally, why not get some reliable books, in which you may write the youngster's name. Put them on a bookshelf and suggest that, since he is growing up, he may want to know things he's forgotten, or more about the same things, and he may need the books for reference. Say that once in a while, if he wants to ask you some questions or discuss aspects he doesn't understand, you'll talk them over. You can't promise the answers he seeks (you'd be surprised at the devious questions he will ask), but you'll try. Actually, many questions, phrased in almost scientific terms, will lead to a discussion that is clearly a query about the youngster himself, his shaky feelings, his uncertainties. But waiting for questions is unnecessary; show the boy or girl you're ready to talk, if and when he wants to. Two or three months later he may want to.

You can make the same kind of offer about bringing friends home. You must remember that young adolescents, from all kinds of homes ranging from the grandest to the simplest, are at this point trying hard to be citizens of the world, no different, better, or worse than their companions. They may balk at parties at home—or tell you not to visit their schools. But if you say, "Let me know if you'd like to have the gang over some Friday night," it's a large enough offer to carry over and be remembered. Many young adolescents prefer to have some of their own sex in for at-home get-togethers. They may want nothing more exciting than a place to sit and talk. These times are very necessary and healthy periods of reintegration, when boys give and take equally with other boys, feeling secure in themselves without the effort of having to be "popular" with the girls; when girls exchange similar problems and observations and feel better for having talked together.

Unless you remember your own adolescence you can't evaluate fully what these sessions mean. There is a lot of wordless communication none of us understands, nobody can pin down in a psychology book. We have said that girls in the adolescent growing period have approximately two years' advantage over boys physically and emotionally. Both sexes may

be under strain because of such differences—the girls looking and acting more grown up at fifteen or sixteen than their male classmates, and feeling a bit unsatisfied by the unsophisticated masculine attention they get; the boys striving for female recognition, when what they often get is disdain for their “silly” attempts.

We cannot fully appreciate, then, what satisfactions a girl finds in her girl friend, a boy in his chum. But when parents say or imply that a friendship like this is a “bad influence,” sometimes misinterpreting the relationship, they may make the boy or girl cringe with unhappiness and resentment. Perhaps, on the surface, the present friend appears too irresponsible, too “free” with his talk—but you have to be a fairly accomplished observer before you can estimate his strengths and understand what your child finds in him.

When you have given your child trust and respect, when you’ve shown him that your rules are not unjust deprivations, he will not suddenly break with all your guidance to follow, willy-nilly, where others are going. Nor do you know what a girl or boy is really like when you uphold him or her as a “better” companion. Do you remember times in your own adolescence when the “little lady” or “gentleman” extolled by your parents was one of the most hypocritical characters you’ve ever met?

We cannot, with all our solicitude or understanding, provide our children with what their friends offer. We shouldn’t try to. Deprecating his friends, discussing their homes, family backgrounds, intellectual achievements unfavorably, touches your own child on many sides. It slurs something in his own character; it makes him feel unsure of his own judgment and more secretive than ever (it may provoke a decision never to let you know whom he likes). While it stimulates resentment now, later it may alter his judgment about people so that he chooses for superficiality rather than for common goals and values.

A child who doesn’t have friends or doesn’t associate with a gang may line himself up on the side of adult values and scorn the silly antics of his contemporaries. But you may be fairly sure that such talk is either a defensive pose or a cover-up for private doubts, questions, worries about himself and his relations to his agemates. Despite a grown-up exterior, he may carry within himself a mixture of confused, immature emotions, and he is missing what is so important in teen-age group life.

We mustn’t forget to add this for parents: when you start

talking to the child as if you are pleased that he is maturing, as if he merits politeness and trust, you find also (maybe only at times) a deeper sweetness and understanding in his response to you. Just as he is becoming more aware of himself, he is also more aware of greater depths in human relationships. He may be less of a child, but far more of a personality; while he is openly resentful at times, he is often generous in proportion, understanding more of the qualities you as a person have, as well as your failings. You may find that your Christmas gift is a token of deeper thought than formerly, that the effort you extend for him is appreciated. This growth of understanding love is a part of development which hasn't been emphasized enough, but it does come in adolescence, and it is not nurtured by strong-arm methods or where there is no acceptance of other emotional attitudes.

MATURITY INTERESTS AND FRIENDSHIP

As the young adolescent settles down in his group, finds his areas of interest, he becomes more discriminating in his choice of friends. You may see that because he finds status in a relatively small group of boys and girls, he is less threatened by the larger group and can take or leave their standards and values without the confusion which he felt earlier. He's more sure of how to dress and what to say; he may like parties and dates; he may, after an apparent slump for two or three years, take up again at home interests which you thought were forgotten; he may take an active part in planning parties, talk in respectful terms about a girl or a boy who two years before, was a "drip," a "pest," "crazy," "silly," etc. He begins also to evaluate friends for their true worth, and sometimes he wants to talk to you about them in those terms. He may start collecting records, show an interest in adult literature—and, if he is a boy, will probably start revamping his wardrobe, choosing ties and suits with almost fanatical care.

From the middle years to the late adolescent years, the girl or boy may for the first time feel the agony of rejection in a love relationship, or he may be faced with problems which press heavily on him—of how far to go physically in necking or petting; what to do and what to say to avoid being hurt; how to know if someone cares about you, whether to show how you feel or not; what the future holds when you love a person now, with marriage and a career so far away.

Here is where parents have their greatest anxieties, fearing what will happen to their children sexually, worrying about "how far" they will go. Most parents don't seem to realize the fine moral and ethical sense of most adolescents, the dislike of indiscriminate petting and "affairs." We've heard adolescents from twelve to twenty talk about other girls or boys, and when they discover that a boy or girl isn't choosy about what he or she does, that person is usually designated as a "mess." What is a "mess"? Generally, from what we gather, a youngster who has little feeling about his own body or his own person or his own talents as worth while, who solicits or seeks attention because there are few other areas, especially at home, where he or she feels good, accepted, loved. A "mess" is a person whom children might, at other stages of development, call a "drip" or a "pest,"—any term that means he hasn't a sense of what is fitting and what isn't, in the social group.

If we haven't done so in the past, we can help adolescents find interests and pursue activities where they are not wholly dependent on parties and dating for personal satisfaction. So very often we are hesitant about letting them go off on trips or excursions which might enlarge their horizons and help them mature—usually because we are afraid of harmful influences along the way. Today it is almost essential that young people know and meet the different kinds of people, the different kinds of experiences, from which they can choose companions. When an adolescent is bound to one group in one area, he may be forced, through circumstances, to follow its pattern of activity because he needs friends and there is no other choice. When youngsters can see that there are other people whose interests are varied, whom they like, there are no better incentives and opportunities for their own maturation and growth.

Often adults beyond the home give young people a friendly attention and a pattern in their lives which are stimulating and offer the horizons we speak of. Many times in schools, colleges, camps, work situations, there are adults or guidance people to whom the adolescent turns, with whom he talks out bothersome problems of what to do, what to think about his work, about his friendships, about "the" girl.

Again, we may be impatient or a trifle peeved when youngsters go to outsiders with their questions. It is, however, much easier for a boy or girl to discuss questions with an admired adult than with his parents. Parents are so emotionally in-

volved in their children's lives, and so anxious, that they cannot always adequately or calmly talk about girl-boy relationships. A counselor can evaluate more objectively the total situation. He has seen other boys and girls; he knows, in general, what their friendships mean, how they normally behave together; he soon learns who are the boys and girls who are not personally responsible, but he knows that they all have questions which aren't surprising or unusual. And boys and girls expect that, when they go to such trusted outsiders, they won't be "talked down to," or lectured, or cautioned unnecessarily. If another adult gives your adolescent the feeling that his problems or observations are normal and usual, that alone helps him constructively.

During the mid-adolescent years (from about fifteen to eighteen, let us say) boys and girls form attachments that are rarely lasting. That is, they may be working out a way of *acting* in a love relationship, rather than loving, as one does in a deep relationship. The boy or the girl may be absorbed in himself and in his dreams, so that the other person may be more of a focus than an individual.

In these early relationships the young person may be engaged in what might be called a rehearsal of love. He or she is trying to express the earlier confused and formless feelings in a more mature way, looking for someone to endow with lovableness. This expression of altruistic love is poured, we might say, on another person who may not be essentially ready for a mature relationship, or even able to return such feeling.

This rehearsal of love may not fulfill the first person's needs at all—but it is an early expression of grown-upness, and a way of attaining masculinity or femininity.

Such relationships are often broken when the demandingness, the need for attention, of the second person becomes too much for the boy or girl to handle. You may find, then, that the vacuum left by the relationship causes keen self-criticism and unhappiness.

Here young people need encouragement in thinking of themselves and their own values, and in finding such values in other people. The best, most enduring love relationships we know have grown out of a core of belief in other people, *plus* a sense of values about what the individual himself wants to do in life. Therefore, these early hurts are constructive when they give young people a chance to find out what they *don't* want as well as what they do want to find in others.

TIME TO COME HOME!

We have tried to emphasize the following aspects of home regulations for the adolescent. 1. Parents have expectations, values, ideals. 2. They try to consider the adolescent and his group. 3. They are flexible, not rigid. There is probably little we can add, then, regarding your attitude about the hours which a boy or girl keeps, except to enlarge and re-emphasize each of these points.

You may need to give your adolescent the feeling that late nights, especially with another work day coming up, may be appealing but don't help health, efficiency, beauty, or even popularity. You do have to be aware of what the expectations are in other families; if you say your adolescent must be inside the door at nine o'clock, while others may stay out until ten-thirty, you are asking for revolt, a little trickery, some falsehoods—or for a “misfit.” You are provoking just what you want to avoid: heedlessness of what you say because you are so obviously making the boy or girl seem “different,” a “sissy,” or a “mere child.”

Your contact with the parents of your child's classmates, or even with the teacher, will generally help you to know what other parents expect as to bedtime hours. However, you must also be aware that for the adolescent time-limits are like any other rule: they spell the flag of authority, and no adolescent is normal who doesn't occasionally abuse the limits. To tell him that your trust has also been abused is a foul play; he likes that sad look no better than he likes a lecture when he comes in. The fun of “lights out” time at camp or boarding school is the risk involved in giggling, laughing, talking after hours, and so on.

So it won't help to be mightily angry, to withdraw future permission to go out, or to sulk. You may have to restate the limitations, but do not use retaliatory measures. So many youngsters feel bitter on the coming-home theme that it is one of the sorest areas in parent-adolescent relationships. It provokes irritability, anger, sulks, back-talk, out-and-out explosions. This expression at home, however, if you listen and talk things over, is far healthier than the other possible result of rigid home rules and punishment for infractions: the deaf ear to parents' words, which youngsters can't listen to and still be “normal” adolescents. Youngsters who have had to defy rules may, having revolted against authoritarian standards, entertain disbelief of or contempt for any kind of standards.

For party nights or date nights, the hours for returning home may vary somewhat with the occasion and whether the youngsters are in someone's home or not. Late party hours are usually an attempt to work some kind of special group spirit that means "fun"; or a late night may be the one night when your son or daughter really shone with popularity and was very loath to go home.

Youngsters who continually stay out late, even on school nights, may be those who don't get a chance to bring their friends home, or see enough of them in the informal sessions where they can talk and act freely, or see the opposite sex except in the wee small hours. Perhaps you need to loosen up on a few disciplinary rules so that your boy or girl can have some free hours in the daytime, too.

We parents, of course, honestly fear the possible consequences of late nights more than we object to the disobedience involved. You may be especially anxious when your youngster is in the early adolescent stage, seemingly open to any stimulation offered. Even at eleven or twelve, a girl or boy may be hotly resentful of curbs on hours. These early years *are* excitable and exciting for youth—but not in the way you think. It may take hours and hours at a dance, for example, before the boys pay direct attention to the girls; meanwhile, from the giggling, raucous laughter, a push here and there, the primping and fussing, you may think that there is a shameful amount of overt sex-consciousness and vulgarity in the air.

But you are wrong. These youngsters are finding out that being together has a new attraction, but they are far less likely to talk about sex—or even to admit that attraction—than they would have been two years ago. The manifest signs of new attraction and excitement are a disguise rather than display. For weeks and months this "horsing around" may go on as the *only* contact between the sexes. It takes time to get to know one another, even to have some sort of meaningful conversation. And you will find that your boy or girl feels there is never enough time.

Therefore, when you rant about infringements of time-limits at night not only are you being unfair, but you are imputing to the boy or girl motives or deeds which are not in his mind but in yours. Having new barriers to his own behavior, feeling new alertness to words, to ideas, seeing new lacks in his own personality, trying hard to be recognized, he is filled with resentment at your implied accusations.

Night itself is a new excitement for the adolescent. As for

the young child who goes out to see the moon on a late summer evening for the first time, the young adolescent's taste of nighttime, with the day's work put away, is a very heady experience. You can see quite clearly why the adolescent under too much pressure of anxiety or responsibility, under tension at school, likes the late wakeful hours when the causes of such tension are absent. Sleep, after all, is the absence of awareness and always brings a new day chock full of work.

We have to see, therefore, whether young people ever have a chance to slump and daydream during the day, or to get together and talk in the living room, unthreatened. We have to phrase requests for coming home with trust in the child and his friends. Don't blame, ridicule, or belittle those friends as the cause of your youngster's lateness. Don't tell him he's "like his father," "on the road to ruin," shameless, and so on. You can ask whether a girl can get someone to walk her home, or whether she has "emergency" money on hand for taxi fare in case of lateness she can't help. You can ask for a general family agreement that he or she will try to make the deadline, if possible. You can request a phone call if the hours seem to be rolling on. You can ask that school nights be given special consideration.

You can also get to know your children's friends informally, be able to say, "Hello, come see us," learn to be discreet when you overhear their talk about other friends, expect to have your house look like a menagerie or a railroad station some days. We must repeat that you have to accept and expect mess, laziness, sofa pillows on the floor, unless you want to lose contact with their lives.

Another reason for late night hours or long sessions behind closed doors or in ice-cream parlors is that adolescents are just learning to talk to one another in new terms, to put feelings into words. There are so many things they never thought about, or at least never expressed in their own language to one another before: about love, the world, religion; about sisters and brothers, fathers and mothers; about war and peace, marriage, men and women; music, movies, art, science, education, teachers, older boys and girls, work. They are so tongue-tied, so unsure and alone in their own feelings that often the last half-hour on a late night may be the one small period of close rapport and deep thinking with one another.

Astonishingly, your youngster will be more approachable, too, in conversation with a few friends, or when you have

time to sit and listen. Don't consider the talk silly or vulgar or morally wrong. It's the adolescent's way of questioning, of unburdening frustration or anxiety, of wanting to find positive values in the world. Courses on marriage and family relations help a youngster to realize common problems in life, but there is a new growth, a deeper knowledge, which comes from thinking out, talking out honestly and intimately, his puzzled observations. If you know adolescents at all, you know that this is what they spend hours doing, and you must admit it's the most essential part of living. You can't hope to understand an adolescent unless you are willing to accept *who* he is, his own turmoil and problems, and see the searching reflected in his behavior.

Adolescence, despite its problems, shows one of the finest manifestations of the democratic group; it is, in the youngster, the realization that there are no rigid, prescribed answers for every person's life; it's the realization of loneliness, but a new sensitivity to one's fellow man; it's the feeling of being on one's own, responsible for the carrying through of ideals we implanted with the first admonition not to steal the apple on the grocer's cart, or beat up baby brother. The adolescent needs to know that you like him as a person—you don't *only* love him as your child.

MANNERS

To many parents, rudeness seems to be the first indication of the approach of adolescence. At the same time, in schools or other places where children meet, the coming of adolescence brings a new sort of manners; these manners may not be polished, and in the politeness there may be some teasing, but there is a definite attempt on the child's part to say the thing which is "proper" among his peers, and seldom do you hear the very critical or rude attack on another youngster which you found earlier. The boy or girl who is impolite or hurtful or always disagreeable in his comments may very easily find himself on the outside of the group. Those who anger easily, who boast or brag, who whine for attention, aren't too popular, either.

Now this change away from home doesn't necessarily mean that politeness is easily learned, or that it is permanent. The change comes from the awareness we spoke of earlier: the boy's or girl's changing realization of his own person and of his relationship to other people. He is becoming a more

sociable person who must set aside some childish patterns of gaining attention in a group, and instead learn to *demonstrate* that he wants to be accepted and acceptable. He may gripe openly with his friends about the teacher, the school, the rules, but he gripes with them, not against them. Also, he acquires a jargon, a certain cynical way of making observations which adds an air of superiority to his judgments.

Again, he may be a gentleman and she a lady when they visit relatives or neighbors, and yet be unmannerly at home. Part of this rudeness is, as you can easily guess, a result of the irritations and frustrations during the day, which cannot be worked off emotionally in the social group. Part of it is the vague discontent with things and people familiar, with all the reminders of childhood. A mother's solicitude may get the same response as if she scolded; little sister's enthusiastic greeting may be met with "Aw, shut up"; a few words from father may cause a flood of tears, a dash for the bedroom, and sulks at dinner.

Often, as we said earlier, the adolescent can't explain why he behaves as he does. Part of it may be sheer letdown, like the sigh of relief all of us give when we are tired with the effort of meeting people, of being polite, of being gay and pleasant. Finally, then, the adolescent's quick reactions and moodiness reflect his sensitivity, not only to our expectations but to all the social pressures he meets outside: the demand for conformity, for work, for cooperation, for a show of capability.

Mothers have noticed that the young adolescent needs as much patience as he did when he was a little child, expostulating loudly against going to bed, against putting on his sweater, etc. He needs an extra effort (which you often feel you shouldn't have to give) at a very direct, warm answer to his rudeness or sudden outbursts. To be in this sensitive, "touchy" state bewilders the child himself, and an out-and-out immediate reaction against his rudeness provokes the resentful feeling that "you don't understand." You don't—if you pitch battle each time. He can't tell you all the feelings of pressure or strain he has felt during the day. Sometimes they can't be summed up in words; maybe (unless you are a shrewd observer), even if you visited his school for a day, you yourself couldn't put your finger on the pressures or frustrations, for they may be reflected only in his own personal feelings. So when you rail against his unpleasant tone of voice you touch off resentments and feelings of self-pity, and you add the final straw of pressure for the day.

Someone has to start the ball rolling toward pleasantness; someone has to show he (or she) cares, and, whether you like it or not, this takes effort. You may think it's more "natural" to act just the way you feel, too, but you had to grow up and learn that human relationships are more satisfactory when they involve a little effort on your part. You call forth from others what you give; your youngster is learning that social fact in his group. He needs, however, to learn from you a pattern for responding in intimate situations.

Don't get huffy, then, about the "So what?" "Oh, for heaven's sake!" "Oh, blah!" "Nuts!" or whatever phrases may greet a suggestion from you. Remember, when your child was six or seven, the sudden letdown after school, the floating fretfulness which was always ready to pop? This new vulnerability or "touchiness" is almost the same kind of response. There are tired times, letdown times, for everyone after the day's work—and school life, believe it or not, is as much or more work than what you do.

Go easy, then, and don't start talking about what has to be done, the messy bedroom, the dusty-looking moccasins, or the untidy hairdo. Allow time for settling down, or suggest a half-hour's sit-down or lie-down time.

Rudeness, constant taunts at the younger children, repeated verbal assaults on mother's cooking, father's jokes, his hobbies or friends, can, of course, become a destructive force in the family, leaving no time for happy conversation. Many times such persistent belittling indicates there's something bothering the adolescent other than just the day's trials. It may be the way his home is set up, some aspect of his family living that he wishes, for heaven's sake, could be changed. It may be that he's deeply troubled about his father's and mother's relationship, or resentful of the time and attention parents pay to each other or to the other children, or even that he wishes they'd take his troubles more seriously!

A little girl may be intolerant of a mother who takes the rudeness blithely. If something is bothering the child, if there's been a divorce, for example, or adult quarreling, mother's apparent lightheartedness can be very trying, if not damaging. Or when a young boy is trying hard to act grown-up, father's continual, even if good-natured, laughter about the youth's preoccupations may cause not deep resentment, perhaps, but a constant mood of irritability that is wearing on the family good humor. To a boy or a girl parents may look so preoccupied with their own problems, their social life, or their careers, that the child's problems seem to

be on the periphery of theirs; so he may want to needle them, to shake up their apparently smug and ignorant attitude toward what he is going through. Like the sulky child, or the child in a temper tantrum, he wants a person-to-person response. These irritating forms of behavior are often cries for help by a child who doesn't know what ails him or what he wants or needs.

You can very easily, without filling the house with recriminations, talk to the youngster privately, directly. There is a great deal to be said for telling the child at any age to be mad at what he's mad at, and express it openly, instead of continually showing smoldering resentment at everything. Sliding over his anger as unimportant won't help him meet his problem. You may be nettled when you are under unceasing fire, and you probably should be. But he wants to know that you care about what he says and that it means something.

You can tell him, when you can talk alone, that you do get irritated at constant gibes—you can't help it. But ask if there is something you do or don't do which is really provoking his attacks. Tell him it's perfectly normal for him to show such feelings, if he'll only "spit them out" and not leave you helpless in the dark. Ask him to say what's the matter. You know growing up isn't easy; you know that there are many, many things expected of him which take effort and make him generally moody. This pressure may give him a pattern of all-round crankiness which is not part of him and which doesn't particularly make him feel good about himself. But it isn't fair to you (or to the other parent, or to little sister) to give you the brunt of his feelings. You don't dislike him; you respect him—but there have to be times when you can talk to each other without growling.

Being angry is good very often. Your child wouldn't be normal if he didn't fume about some of the things you say or do. *But* you wouldn't be normal, you wouldn't even be his parent—you might qualify as a nice, cool, and distant observer—if *you* also didn't get riled up by his continual taunting. Nor does small sister understand why she gets told to "drop dead" whenever she opens her mouth. She's a pest, she's noisy, she takes time and patience, and he isn't her mother, *but* he has to understand that she's also, occasionally, a nice little girl and an admirer of his, and that a kind word now and then won't hurt.

You can say all of this, expecting that you are being heard and respected, as you are. You cannot, however, pull the

ground out from under the adolescent by ignoring or minimizing his feelings as if they didn't exist, for they do. He may be angry about past events, as he sees them reflected in his present feelings. A real, honest expression of anger is just that, an honest, person-to-person feeling; it is one way of letting people know you're a person, too. But pent-up hostility is so elusive, so foggy, that no one knows where he stands, least of all the adolescent. Try to see, as a parent, that honest feelings of anger directed at the cause of such feelings are a release, just as a good cry is a release.

Every family is different in its child-rearing, so when you get a release of feeling it will be directed at you individually, and it will mean more of a deflation for you than if your child were angry at the way *all* parents brought up their children. However, he doesn't know, deeply, other adolescent's feelings, or what they do at home. He has to live with his own private family affairs and feelings and has to reconcile them with new demands and new sensitivity. You needn't be a doormat or a patient saint, but you're big enough to take criticism, human enough to understand anger, and to be angry at times, mature enough not to explode or sulk or call him "ungrateful," and sufficiently discreet to make up quickly, and avoid recriminations.

But please, parents, don't pry and poke to get confidences that may damage your trust in the child or in yourself. You know your own strengths. If, in the past, there have been crises which left *you* shaky about your parental role, which gave you the feeling of being rejected, don't ask for confidences which you know will only make you miserable. As long as your youngster knows you're not shocked by the fact that he has feelings, then he may be able to talk to a qualified person outside the home (again in privacy), to understand his anger or resentment, and to find out he's not unusual or abnormal in having such feelings.

You have to carry on, not weep about the past; young people know that. They want you and your confidence in life, and they won't want to make open admissions which leave you cringing. Just as long as they know you recognize their feelings, they are apt to be more positive in attitude and tone of voice.

As we noted, you will often have to give your adolescent the kind of attention you gave the very young child when he was upset (or, we might add, the kind of attention you give husband or wife when upset)—the direct, special exclusive moments that say, "I care about you." An especially

nice tie for your boy, or a new pencil with his monogram, a handsome key-chain, belt, wallet, tie-clip, a magazine about his hobbies, a picture frame for his best girl, a box of the candy he likes—unasked for—will be a special reminder of your affection and interest. It does something for him, and, surprisingly, it brings back to your mind some of the things you appreciate about him and his growing-up years; it acts almost like a yeast for a warmer, more sympathetic, more positive attitude. Girls like such tokens, too: a scarf, ribbons, bracelet, pin, pretty undies, handkerchief, comb—even a bit of plastic nonsense from the ten-cent store. None of them is costly, but any of them say, “We are not alone; you are not alone; you’re nice.”

Often, if you’ve had prolonged spells of irritability, then a private showdown, and you’ve been told just what is “eating” the youngster, a change in one small area of family living may be symbolic for the boy or girl, enough to make him feel that you, too, are trying to work things out. Examples? Try not to use that cynical tone when you mention your father-in-law, or your early married life when he was on hand. Try not to bring in the little gibes at your spouse’s ego when you are in a bad mood. Don’t always act as tired as if you would shortly collapse; if you are tired, be positive: you’re going to lie down, and you *will* definitely feel much better afterward. Very often a new lamp, new sofa cushions, a new picture on the wall, or throwing out a “white elephant” is a sufficient change in the home to make the adolescent feel that things have shaped up. A set of tumblers for his Coke sessions, a full-length mirror in his room, a space cleared in the living room and given over to his records, may sound like superficial “busy-work,” but they mean change is possible and positive. Sometimes a rearrangement of the furniture means smartness instead of dowdiness to the adolescent. Again we say, you needn’t be like Job, but the little indications that you’re capable of change may make the young person feel that he has a stake in family life; that he can be positive instead of always critical; that families, as well as nations, grow by new developments, constructive criticisms, and changes. And, by the way, this may be a good method for arousing the “responsible” feelings about the family which your adolescent may seem to have lost. Often, very often, your child criticizes or complains when there’s no other way for him to alter the lay of the land; well, then, show him you’re quite ready to listen to positive suggestions. Even if

the change indicates to him only that he is living with two (or more) people who are flexible rather than cast iron figures, is not that in itself a fine attitude to live with?

TIDY AND UNTIDY

We have dwelt at length on the subject of rudeness or impoliteness because it seems to be Waterloo for all parents of adolescents, and also because it is an almost universal sign of the maturing sensitivity within the young person. Unlike many adolescent problems, rudeness at home is probably one of the few difficulties which lies almost completely in the parents' lap.

Poor manners at home, however, may include in parental eyes untidiness in dress, general disregard for rugs and furniture, sloppy ways of eating, disrespect for elders, for punctuality, and so on.

Now one thing which almost invariably happens in families is this: the children are born, and, whether you expect to and are prepared or not, you get some messiness and wear and tear on the home. You give in and decide that children are more important than furniture. Gradually, at eight or nine, your children learn to play in designated areas. They don't trickle sand and water on the rug as often as before; you may have taught them to rinse their hands before wiping them on the towel. Sticky chairbacks and tabletops, scarred beds or bureaus, blankets scalloped by scissors, are more or less under control, and the living room begins to be presentable for guests. Then, just when you've decided that you can really buy the bright chintz slipcovers you've always craved, come the adolescent years, the time when Junior and Sis want to use the sofa fully as a sofa, the pillows as props, the tables for glasses of ginger ale, books, and magazines; when they want to be lazy around people, not only in their bedrooms; when they really accept the term "living room" and start living in the room.

Sadly enough, many of us look at the articles in newspapers and magazines about houses for family living where walls are easily wiped, space is ample, shelves and storage units are inviting, so that you can unclutter a table quickly with no effort. But we live in homes where a glass here and a magazine there can make the small space allotted for "living" a shambles. So we tell the adolescent to take up his bed and walk—to the bedroom. We scoop up unfinished puzzles or

model trains, fluff up the cushions, and bemoan the untidy adolescent.

Unfortunately, too, each of us feels that his or her adolescent is *the* untidiest specimen of all. The universal cry, "Why is my girl [or boy] so careless, so sloppy?" never seems universal to one particular parent! And the actual fact is that most adolescents—especially the boys—seem to be naturally untidy. If you've ever invited another girl or boy to live in your home for a while during the summer, perhaps you've found out that, contrary to expectations, adolescents have incredible blind spots about tidiness and neatness. A girl will wash her hair three times a week and leave her room in a mess. And the odor of soiled socks always greets you from a room where several boys dwell. There is no doubt that adolescence, especially in the beginning, is an untidy time, whether the child is personally unkempt or whether he keeps himself groomed and yet leaves his room in a windblown state.

We have to admit (and fathers will probably readily agree) that the adolescent's attitude to living rooms is probably the right kind of attitude—he really uses the space for what it's meant for.

But why the personal untidiness or even *studied* untidiness of dress? Part of this, especially in your boy, is a protest—the same kind of protest against authority you get at six, the frustrated feeling that he'll be darned if he'll let convention and all the social niceties swamp him, make him a pretty boy. Another very important part is the masculinity that young boys want to portray, a picture of men together, despising the niceties of slicked hairdo, shined shoes, creased pants. In girls, too, there's a reaction against being "sissy." A girl will choose a pair of dungarees or a shirt with care; when she puts them on they look sloppy, but sloppy only in the spots intended. If she talks to you about one shirt versus another, you're just stumped; to you the rejected garment has no apparent defects. But the sleeve, the neckline, the way it bulges at the waist make a big difference.

A third psychological ingredient, and very strategic, too, in this general untidiness, is the disguise, the cover-up value it offers for a young male or female who is worried about his body anyhow and wants to conceal it if possible, but, if that isn't feasible, to cover it with anonymity. He does not want to stand out in cleanliness but rather to be less apparent in messiness. His untidiness is a turning away from his body, an

attempt to forget the anatomy that disturbs him with its ungainliness, unevenness of development, in-betweenness. He does not want to be a picture postcard, to listen to ads, to kowtow to the feminine appeal implied in slick dress.

Gradually, taking their lesson from youth, clothing manufacturers are making more comfortable wearing apparel for young people. And, surprising as it may be, the most feminine little lady feels more modest—and more comfortable, too—in a loose shirt and blue jeans. Clothes are “tubbable,” shoes crepe-soled for sports, and the plaid soft shirt without tie replaces starched broadcloth. So there is a practical quality in what youth wants, as well as a quality of group culture which protests against the fashionable or stylish in grown-ups.

What can we do, however, to give our young people the slight job to help on home tidiness, keeping clean, looking presentable? To consider neatness at home first, let's just decide to make space for the adolescent. Your child is no different from anyone else's; he likes to be where the music, books, conversation, and people are; he likes to relax in a big way—all over; and really, though the dismissal-to-bedroom act may seem justifiable, in a few years you'll fuss when he spirits his friends to his bedroom. When your friends come for an evening don't you expect to have to empty ashtrays, tidy here and there, wipe a spot from the rug? Do you all relax, or do you sit on the edges of your chairs? You may say that's different—you expect that from guests. Well, bedrooms are private places for adolescents, wonderful to be alone in, but they're not sociable places, not where all the family reading or listening to TV or talking goes on.

Try to clear a shelf or a corner for the adolescent's book or magazine, even if it does have a bathing beauty on the cover. You can stow napkins and cleansing tissues in one of those small table drawers whose use is so often puzzling, and indicate that they can be used! Then, instead of nagging day after day on the “untidiness” angle, a good, once a week shake-up and clean-up may be accepted far more easily than daily pickups.

Have you ever thought how much more efficient you feel when you're in someone else's home doing somebody else's dishes? Your adolescent would probably much prefer to do the family ironing or make the desserts for a week than tidy up after himself. We are very much in favor of sharing in the family, but not the sharing in terms of “This is my mess

here; that's yours over there; clean it up." Why all the fuss over the personal caches of each family member? Isn't it better if the child learns to cooperate where it helps in a bigger way? We know any number of children who can be oblivious to others' needs, or to the numberless little jobs at home, but are quite careful of their possessions: We know other children who pitch in to clean up for a party, who'll get a meal, sweep a floor, even buy a new ashtray for the living room, and yet be disorderly in their own rooms. We know boys and girls who spent their growing-up years in boarding schools and learned responsibility about their personal things, but who have no idea of give and take in a family—cleaning up after someone else, making the *other* person's bed, doing someone else's laundry with theirs. (It comes harder when they have to learn in young married life.) This is what families stand for. So, while we must ask for personal responsibility, it is wise to ask that things be done for others, too.

Often the adolescent's disorder is only a reflection of change and disorder in the new horizons he sees for himself. It's almost too much of an effort to create neatness. And often, too, he'll be ready for a big job like painting, or waxing a table, or even mopping a floor, where he feels a sense of accomplishment and definite, tangible results. That's why we say that the once-a-week bang-up cleaning means more than the continual little gathering of papers or clothing, magazines or dirty glasses.

Why not put the proposition to him about those bigger jobs? Often, if you have some outside help on cleaning, those big jobs are done for the child all his life, and he's left with the miserable dishes, which nobody loves. Or you do the mopping, window-cleaning, scraping, shellacking yourself, and then try to get cooperation on odds and ends of work. You need to understand and accept that simple neatness and tidiness for the young adolescent may take far more effort than a day spent in the gymnasium. On the other hand, you need also to expect something from the adolescent, to give him a forward-going pattern that will help him *not* to get stuck in a morass of his own untidiness, psychologically or physically.

Very often you need to start the ball rolling—set up the shelf where he can put papers, clear out one drawer for miscellaneous junk, once in a while get together with him on a thorough spring-cleaning session, where you help him with

an organizational scheme for his own things. He is like the small child in a way: more disorder is more confusing, but when you help him set up a framework for tidiness he gets a clearer picture of how he can tackle subsequent layers of knickknacks, papers, clothing.

We are all in favor, too, of the "company clean-up," when there is an object in mind for immediate tidying and polishing. The adolescent sees no great need for constant, picayune fussing about dust. But, being very conscious of his social world, he will be better able to understand a pleasant atmosphere for guests. Meanwhile, of course, you have to parallel his efforts for *your* guests with your efforts for *his* guests.

Even with the best intentions, however, he will probably groan at clean-up suggestions. Like the rude remarks, the groans and sighs are part of the total feeling of pressure and strain. Here, too, the uncomplimentary expressions can be taken without recrimination, without reminding the adolescent that his "attitude is bad," that he should be more grateful for everything you do for him. He probably is very well aware of it, but he doesn't see all the reason for it that you do! And actually, if you expect wholehearted, happy cooperation, always given with smiling cheer, you'll be asking for what is only given in fairy stories—a devotion of the adolescent to you, your house, your pattern of living, that is neither wise nor normal.

Make all the concessions you can to general untidiness, for that is normal and practically inevitable; as a matter of fact, we wager that if your young adolescent *were* neat and clean and tidy you'd have a host of other problems in your relationship that would counterbalance the sanitary standards of your home. You should expect some help from him for the good of the house, but expect it without hoping for cheers in the process.

The same idea applies to your child's personal neatness. Nagging, to the youngster, represents slights on his wisdom, independence, and personal value, and nagging statements, we must admit, are almost invariably phrased as slights, which is why none of us like them. There's a kind of acid in these remarks that eats into relationships, hurting the very attitude we want to foster. "Can't you ever learn to be tidy?" "It's high time you learned to pick up after yourself." "You are *not* going out until you change that shirt and those socks. What's the matter with you, anyhow? Don't you feel

ashamed?" Our attempts to keep up a standard of respectability push all of us to make these remarks occasionally, and almost from birth to maturity they reach the child individually, too, and make him feel that he and he alone is whatever you say—nasty, selfish, unkind, untidy.

Give him expectations to grow on; that is, let him have the "feel" of untidiness but also the realization of neatness. Give him a hand in choosing clothes, pulling out cast-offs for a rummage sale, making decisions about when shoes need mending or socks need to be thrown away. But try not to ask him for continual personal neatness. Whatever it is about dirt that's comforting to children becomes discomfiting in a very few years. In the pre-adolescent and early adolescent years neatness, bodily or otherwise, is one of the touchiest subjects in the child's living habits.

You need to be discreet; you need to make suggestions at moments when the entire family isn't on hand to stare; you have to keep the suggestions positive and in line with what other youngsters are wearing or doing. You must remember that there has been a shift—over just two years, perhaps—from your fairly close supervision of the boy's or girl's clothing, bath-taking, laundry, to his own responsibility. The child himself is in a mixed position, too; he doesn't want you to poke, pry, or nag, but he can't quite manage the reins of self-government yet. Time and again this contradiction is what irritates parents in whatever comes up about neatness, responsibility, homework.

The main directive, then, that parents can take is the one which does not make the youngster feel himself incompetent or lazy or different; an attitude that leaves the personal reproach and the nagging reminder out of requests, but maintains the expectation that he will respond to a positive request when necessary, that he will eventually, almost certainly, grow out of the untidy stage. There is a lag in organization, inwardly and outwardly, between the time when he proclaims a bristly independence and the time when he achieves self-control.

Also, remember that in your efforts at neatness you may put too much emphasis on dress or grooming, so that you reinforce the adolescent's concentration on his body; you may be adding to the worries which he is trying to work out and live through, and which he can eventually outgrow.

ETIQUETTE

In the adolescent years the chief force in a young person's social maturation is his group. Very often, then, he is more interested in the little details of what is right and proper—not in his family, but in meeting other people. A rigid code of manners or politeness is not always a symbol of respect for other people but, on the other hand, any of the social niceties which puts a boy or girl at ease can be a strengthening factor where he feels out of place. How to phrase an invitation or a thank-you note, how to decline an invitation, how to greet people and say good-by, how to make apologies, may not be too important for the boy or girl until he begins to visit other youngsters in their homes.

Explaining that there are some social forms—or giving him a book on etiquette—may sometimes be valuable for the youngster who is fourteen or fifteen and troubled about what is and is not correct. Our etiquette today is more flexible than it was years ago—a girl calls a boy on the telephone very often to make a date, or she dresses informally for the date, or she pays her half of the admission charge to a moving picture. But it's still pleasant to get a thank-you note, still good to know how to R.S.V.P.

While we may argue that young people should be able to pick up such bits of etiquette from grown-ups, often they don't share grown-up parties or go out to dinner with you. The basic social niceties, therefore, the acceptance of friends and other people, will be given to children by the way you accept their friends, by how you include them, without embarrassing comments, in a grown-up group. You like to put people who visit you at ease in your home; so you help the adolescent to be at ease by letting him be himself, avoiding reminders of untidiness or manners in front of others. He can greet people and excuse himself from the group politely, if you are polite enough to introduce him.

We can't impose social form on children before they see its meaning. Furthermore, we cannot bind the child by a set of manners which we watch and constantly correct until he gets the "shakes" in social groups. And we mustn't expect that he is going to find life easier in his own age group because he has a nice grown-up list of social forms to guide him. We need, rather, to give him every possible help for being himself, relaxed, and at ease with people.

Forms of etiquette can be forms which he knows about, reads about, can refer to when necessary. When he does need

them, when he pays a week-end visit to a friend's house, or when he finds himself in a new situation, then if he has a natural liking for people, a relaxed manner, plus the "know-how" of conversation, dress, and table manners, including grown-up uses of knives and forks, he will feel less threatened by strangers, more willing and able to meet and greet people from many different groups.

ALLOWANCES; JOBS FOR MONEY

The question of whether to give allowances or not seems to be more or less answered by the fact that almost every family nowadays, despite its financial status, lets its youngsters have a weekly or monthly sum of money to manage by themselves and use for personal expenses. With the young child you may find that the management of such money is erratic, but the feeling of independence which he gains from being able to buy a frivolous toy, from knowing that he can make a choice in his purchases and that his wants are treated as important in the family, is far more valuable to his growth than the money he receives. You generally know how he spends his allowance. You are not dismayed that it all goes for comics or candy or a model plane. However, throughout those childhood years it is essential not to make the allowance so important, so tied up with good behavior, good marks, obedience, that it loses value as a lesson in independence and becomes, instead, only a reminder of the child's dependence on you and your moods. Money given or withheld for the child's behavior becomes weighted with all kinds of connotations—"When I have lots of money, I'll show them," for instance. Or the child feels insatiable, wanting what he can get and more, persisting in the infantile attitude of dependence rather than learning to find satisfaction in being independent, learning how to spend and how to save.

These remarks apply to the adolescent as well as to the younger child. The adolescent, however, may need to revise his budgetary requirements with you, since he has many more legitimate needs than the younger child. Interests in hobbies or sports may often take him beyond the immediate neighborhood; he needs carfare or bus fare. His suddenly ravenous appetite for after-school snacks *with his own group* puts a heavy drain on monetary resources. He'd like to give presents; and there's a kind of notebook, emblem, pencil, magazine that is very important right now, and he can't wait

for a birthday. There are also many things he needs which he doesn't want to tell you about—very simple things, no doubt, but they might seem silly in your eyes, and anyhow he's becoming secretive and wants to manage his social needs himself.

The adolescent, moreover, is also a little more aware that his allowance comes out of family funds. He may feel dependent on your good graces, a little guilty about draining your pockets—even when you've said nothing about withdrawing the allowance. The way in which you confer with the adolescent about his allowance may make a difference to him. If you say sadly, "We'll try to do all we can," when he asks for a "raise," he'll feel some guilt about asking for your sacrifice, especially if he is a responsible youngster.

If you treat the adolescent's social needs as you do your own necessary expenditures on theaters, entertaining, exchanging presents, if you show him that such expenses are fairly important in your life but have to be budgeted, if you ask him to work out his own budget in like proportions, then he'll feel less guilty or resentful of the fact that you work for his allowance. You may work hard for the wages you get, but part of those wages are channeled into some form of recreation or relaxation. The adolescent shouldn't necessarily feel that he has to keep up monetarily with everyone in his crowd—you don't. But neither should he feel strapped and guilty because, compared to family needs, his expenditures seem unnecessary and foolish.

Some parents prefer to give the adolescent, especially the youngster away from home, a lump sum which includes a clothing and recreation budget. One positive aspect of this plan is the leeway which the youngster uses in buying one article which may be impractical, but then toning down his needs in other areas. There is probably, in such a system, a good deal of unwise expenditure, but we've seen youngsters become very practical consumers, demanding the most for their money in suits, socks, shoes, recreation. We've heard them devise ways of cutting down on laundry or cleaning bills to meet the deficit incurred by the purchase of several new records. As we say, many youngsters purchase unwisely, or have to write home for a little more money, but they do, also, have the opportunity to discover what is valuable in their lives and how to budget for it.

There ought to be some way of giving the youngster at home an opportunity for this kind of choice. Birthday or Christmas gifts of money which is not tagged with any

"musts" may give him a cushion for extra expenses. A sum which includes money for some clothing—perhaps underwear, socks, shoes, blouses, and incidentals like shampoo, cosmetics, toothpaste, postage stamps, writing paper, and extras like sodas and carfare—often gives the youngsters a new awareness of his ability to purchase and make good judgments about purchases. "Necessities" are included in such a budget so that the adolescent's feeling of continually asking for money to cover what might be considered "unnecessaries" gives way to the feeling of being entrusted with a sum with which he can make choices.

There is, moreover, a good deal to be said for the physical act of going to the post office and buying stamps, or remembering to stop at the drug counter for toothpaste. We do so many of these things for our youngsters that we forget that the cost of a postage stamp, for instance, is less important than the thought and effort put into its purchase. Even the simple responsibility of handling money, keeping it in a safe place, watching that there is loose change available for the morning's carfare, is something new for adolescents. All the actions connected with purchasing—paying bills, selecting a size and color of garment, a brand of nail polish, a grade of hosiery—have become second nature to you by the time you are the parent of an adolescent. Even making a request of a sales clerk and stating what you want clearly, without timidity, is a job you learned by experience. Money, in itself, doesn't determine your efficiency; you've had to learn the hard way that, even with money in your purse, your purchasing efficiency will be the result of thought, effort, and time. This expenditure of time and effort gives the adolescent, too, a sense of efficiency.

Another item on parents' allowance "agenda" is the question of whether a young person should get paid for jobs he does at home. So often we hear that payment should not be given, that family jobs should be done out of cooperation and love. But nowadays, what with homework, extracurricular activities in secondary school, there isn't much energy or time left over for the youngster to do jobs away from home. Babysitting has, of course, proved a boon for many youngsters; they can do homework and yet spend a financially profitable evening. Or children may do errands for friends and be paid. But on the whole there are few places in the neighborhood where a young person can earn money which he can say is truly his own; home is probably the only available place for such gainful employment.

We can see no real objection to an adolescent's earning money at home if he wants to. You can expect that one or two chores or responsibilities will be carried out without pay, as part of the boy's or girl's contribution to family maintenance. But there are jobs, either regular or periodic household chores, which an adolescent can do well and for pay.

Caring for younger brothers and sisters on a Saturday might be considered a labor to be done for love, especially if the adolescent is good at it or makes no outright protest. However, it is not an easy task for even the most patient of young people. It's a very important job, as you realize when you must scout around for a baby-sitter; it's a job you yourself do for love—and satisfaction—but it may be accompanied by mixed feelings in the adolescent. Certainly there are times when he can keep an eye out for the younger child without being paid in cash, but for long periods, we think, everyone is happier if the job is given paid status. Many young girls may be good with children, but you must not discount that ability because it seems so usual, almost like a talent for washing the dishes. A young boy may have a knack with children, a gift for imaginative storytelling, a good way of teaching games. But he'll forget such talents exist if they are taken gratis and for granted.

Some parents fail to make specific requests and then nag because a job is done poorly or not at all. If you want the sink wiped after dishes are done, and the garbage put into the garbage pail, ask for it! Yes, it's more trouble for you, but the adolescent often needs to get the feel of a whole job. Often we are afraid of groans, but groans and gripes are part of group living; you may be sure that the adolescent's self-satisfaction will also come through.

You have this also to remember: neither allowances nor paid jobs should be bribes for good behavior, good marks, or good relationships with you. A job is a bargain which says, "I need your extra work here, and I will pay for it." It isn't fair to remind a child that you've "paid good money for this," or to use the same money as a drawing card for more responsibility; that, really, is the trouble with family jobs so often—we expect more than the youngster has given, and we expect gratitude plus work. Job situations are usually the other way around: if a person has done his bit in labor he does not feel that there is still a debt of gratitude on his conscience.

Now all this may sound as though there is a sum of money stacked in your family vault and labeled "for the adolescent." We know the sad unreality of such an idea. On

the other hand, we cannot discount the adolescent's needs. If you've given him a fair measure of independence, he will not be a continual beggar for funds.

If you have to make choices about the quality of clothing you buy for him, let him help make the choices; the only reason he will gripe about an inexpensive garment is because at some time or other you may have done some uncomplimentary comparing of your own wardrobe, or your home, or your car, with the neighbor's.

No, it isn't being different to have to make choices, nor to make your adolescent feel that he, too, can and will have to choose. He may go through a period of choosing the sleazy, poorly made garment instead of the simpler one in better taste, but he'll learn. Your daughter may want the "baby doll" kind of shoe, or the ultrasophisticated blouse one year, and the next go so conservative on you that you fear she'll be an old maid! Usually, though, while you may tear your hair about the mode of dress of today's adolescent, you must admit it tends to simplicity and comfort.

At every stage of the game you *do* have to make the effort to budget for children's needs; you can't possibly foresee all the expenses of your home, nor the wear and tear upon it. But tackling the family budget in a positive way is far better than groaning and sighing as you hand the adolescent his allowance. Adolescents don't want "splashy" parties or elegant clothes, and they don't mind leftovers. But they should be able to feel hopeful about their social needs, to know that you consider them as carefully as you do your own requirements.

JOBS AND RESPONSIBILITY

The pubertal boy or girl is, as we have noted often here, in a more or less disorganized state. We use "disorganized" for want of a better word, but it usually denotes a negative status. Actually, the young adolescent is *reorganizing* himself, his behavior, and his values; he sees more in his environment, sexually and socially, and is trying to relate himself in more mature ways. Because he is aware of new demands, he must learn to incorporate them in the way he thinks and acts. He begins to visualize what being on his own means, in terms of the future; and this new sense of individual effort and independence is baffling as well as exciting. You might imagine what life means to a young adolescent if you think of your-

self waking on a Monday morning when you are suddenly flooded with thoughts of things to be done—jobs from the week or month before still to be finished, bills unpaid, people whom you must call, a troublesome situation in or out of the family which makes you feel inadequate. All those thoughts or demands are so overwhelming that you feel nothing can be done, and anything that is done will be infinitesimal compared to the large number of demands.

You, however, have worked out some pattern for tackling jobs; you know when you have done your best, and day-by-day necessities or satisfactions often help you manage your larger worries. The young adolescent's worries seem to him insurmountable. He sees the necessity of a job in the future; he is unsure of his talents or capacities for jobs. He knows the necessity of being popular; he finds inadequacies in his own body which seem to put popularity out of reach. Finally, schoolwork seems a world of its own, apart from earning money and becoming financially independent, unrelated to the problem of managing himself and learning to get along with other boys and girls.

Home represents the protecting life, but this is no help when he goes out from the home. Home jobs may remind him of his inadequacy, especially if they are accompanied by constant requests and deprivations and if he himself cannot measure his capacities by the results of his work at the jobs.

Most of us have a notion that when a child does a job he must do it alone, in order to learn independence and initiative. Yet few adult jobs are done alone, without consultation, advisement, or at least the possibility of help if necessary. Also, we may ask the child to do the job which comes hardest to him, although we grown-ups seldom choose careers or projects for which we have little aptitude and interest. There are certainly unpleasant tasks in our lives connected with responsibility, but such tasks are part of the whole, and the whole is usually our chosen job. We therefore can see the necessity of the unpleasant parts, whether we like them or not.

While daily jobs in the family household should seem reasonable demands to the adolescent, they often seem like unnecessary deterrents to living. The dishes and bed-making, shoveling snow, washing windows, scrubbing floors *are* so inevitable that they become taskmasters; we know that and we groan. The adolescent groans, too, since completing those tasks is less related to the adolescent and his dreams and work and social life than to us homemaking adults. Our sights are close at hand; our **social** and family living *now* are most

important. But the adolescent is looking for capability and satisfaction with his eye on a larger horizon in the future.

As we noted earlier, a total all-out clean-up or repair job elicits more enthusiasm and more hard work from the adolescent than daily chores. Moreover, you'll find that jobs, even the daily chore, done *away* from home—in camp or for a neighbor—are quite satisfying to him, almost pleasant. Here the young person is tasting independent responsibility.

Parents should be aware that the adolescent who is *over*-responsible at home may not be as happy with his agemates as he should be; he may not be finding social life satisfactory and therefore continues to seek constant approval at home by pleasing father and mother.

We can assume, therefore, that the adolescent living in a family should do his share of the necessary jobs. But we cannot assume that he is thereby learning responsibility. It is wiser to seek to develop responsibility in an unusual situation where spontaneous help is needed, in his attitude to other persons and to their rights and property, not in the assigned daily chore.

Consider the job you expect of your adolescent for just what it is—a daily chore, and probably dull. He'll gripe about it, and he'll want time off occasionally. Can you be flexible about it? Can he occasionally substitute another chore at another time of day? Can he dash out to the movies tonight while you do dishes—and tomorrow night you dash? Can you remember that practically no chore that an adolescent does by himself is done perfectly? And, if once or twice he remembers to wipe the drainboard *after* he dries the dishes, to put away the pots and pans, to leave the sink clean, do you give him praise and approval? And do you ever have a family conclave about jobs, so that the adolescent and the younger members of the family have a chance to say why they fuss about this or that chore, and you all discuss together why their help is necessary and *how* each one's assistance makes life easier for the others?

Astonishingly enough, their responsibility grows not from rigidly prescribed jobs but from your flexible attitude about chores and your response to the person who does them. If you make the youngster know that he has really contributed something to family living, to a little leisure for you, he feels the satisfaction of having given, whether he gripes or not. If, however, he senses that what he does makes little or no difference in your general outlook on life, that the job or

chore has no relation to living, it becomes a meaningless routine.

In everything we do with people, no matter what or where, the give and take from person to person is what counts. Assume, therefore, that you can confer with your adolescent about just where his help is needed. Assume also that he would like to have you and the rest of the family appreciate his efforts, that if you gain fifteen minutes to lie down, or a short while to sit like a guest in the living room while he sets the table, he is being helpful and you are grateful.

Perhaps your youngster skips out on his share of the chores once in a while, but how does he come through in a crisis? Is he flexible? When you must visit your sick aunt, is he ready to take over where needed without proclaiming, "This isn't *my* job?" Can you feel that when he goes to visit other people he'll know when to help and want to help? Responsibility is a pattern which is caught rather than taught. It comes from a response to people's needs, a sensitivity to the occasions when others need help. Here again you needn't be the proverbial self-sacrificing parent. It's far better to expect something ~~from~~ the adolescent than to make him feel always indebted to you for your work and worry. The growing person who hasn't had something asked of him may resent it later. Often, in later life, we hear the complaint that parents were too protective, didn't give their children the feeling of being needed. And again and again we also hear bitter statements about the dissatisfied parent who didn't let the boy or girl know that he did contribute to their happiness and well-being.

Most youngsters dislike home jobs, but those who feel deeply bitter later on are: (a) those whose own needs and social life have not been recognized as part of their own jobs; (b) those who are assigned chores without any leeway for protesting occasionally or having their protests recognized; (c) those who feel that, although they've done a job, it doesn't count, it isn't big enough or good enough to make any difference in the lives of other family members; (d) young people who have never done any jobs at all, or *only* those designated by parents. We can't overemphasize the need for an adolescent to feel his own strength, to do jobs outside home in order to feel competent in meeting away-from-home standards.

And these, in turn, contribute to the adolescent's evaluation of what he would like to be, what his standards are, what is or is not destructive in human affairs. A feeling of

"this is me," a feeling of individual strength and importance, which parents cannot wholly give in the adolescent years, can come out of work situations.

At home your responses to the adolescent and consideration of his needs, your efforts to make room for everyone's interests, to listen to the problems of the others and not consider them silly or inconsequential, to state your own problems as though they could be licked (or to give them their proper proportion in life)—all these attitudes add up to the pattern of responsibility which your child takes over and lives with. In his family he gets the kind of pattern which no job will ever teach him.

HEALTH CARE IN ADOLESCENCE

We have tried to show how the adolescent demonstrates, in every phase of his development, new awareness and therefore a need for added help from parents and counselors. He is especially concerned about his body, its changes, sensations, and peculiarities, which often seem to him ugly and abnormal. Throughout childhood many pains and aches need only psychological reassurance; bruises and bumps, sniffles and headaches have to be seen to, but usually we try to make the child feel that he needn't pay them too much attention; the healthy child learns to take a certain amount of these occasional hurts without fussing.

At the beginning of adolescence, however, there is a change in the kind of health care needed by the youngster. He begins to worry, not so much about bruises or colds or sore throats as about his weight and height, his skin, various "funny feelings" that aren't pains but trouble him lest something is going wrong. He may become a sweet-eater or a frankfurter fiend, or he may do what is even more worrisome—shows no appetite, refuse breakfast, desultorily poke at vegetables and meat on his dinner plate. He may react violently to smells. Headaches may become frequent. Allergies or hay fever may crop up. He may even develop anxiety because he is "lazy" or because he feels depressed.

In the first place, part of his trouble is probably psychological; that is, some of his physical ills are the result of greater tension, of imbalance within and without. Nevertheless, the ills or upsets, though psychological in origin, may be very real. In the second place, headaches or low energy may have definite physical cause such as eyestrain, slight

anemia, accelerated growth, all of which put a strain on the organism.

It may seem like good mental therapy to tell the young adolescent he is foolish to worry about his health and to urge him to forget himself. Certainly we don't want to give him the notion that he really *is* a sickly, delicate boy or girl. However, there does have to be a middle ground in these years, where we let the adolescent know that he isn't a hypochondriac because he is often physically troubled, but that he isn't abnormal either. Much of your explanation of his difficulties will have to do with the new changes and growths in his body, with the glandular shifts that cause periods of lethargy and low energy. It helps him to realize that what is happening is a maturing process that has not yet reached a point of stabilization; that many of the skin conditions, "ugly" features, even the depressed feelings, may arise from that process, *but* that the process will not stop at that point. "It will feel better soon" is a good, positive statement to use where these aches or depressions arise.

You should schedule yearly physical check-ups for the boy or girl. Where there are complaints of headaches, nausea, pains, you should schedule a doctor's examination promptly. It might be a very good idea to have the physician talk to the child himself—not to lecture, but to let him know, for example, the figures about his weight and height gain, the reasons why acne bothers him, and what to expect about his growth in the next few months. Often the doctor who has known your child for years is able to point out to him some aspect of his growth that might be worrisome unless its normality is emphasized. The so-called "fat" boy at eleven or twelve may feel far greater reassurance when a physician points out that his is a very normal pattern of growth, than when a parent says so. Special attention of this sort from a doctor helps him far more than his parents can. The youngster gets the authoritative, objective reassurance from an outside source which is so necessary in this period.

Sometimes, if your child has had a medical checkup each year, that doctor will know the physical sensitivities of the youngster and may be able to recommend preventive medicine for *that particular child*—exercise, for instance, or some change in diet.

Another aspect of young peoples' anxiety in these years is somewhat removed from the question of health care *per se*, but nevertheless may need some talking-out. Frequently boys and girls are afraid they see in themselves some of the un-

desirable personality traits or physical characteristics of an aunt, an uncle, or even a parent. Usually they make such tacit generalizations because a "family resemblance" exists, or because they react to situations in similar ways. We know that we are a mixture of physical characteristics from a mixture of forbears, and that a temperament may have hereditary basis, too. And we know that children imitate and identify with parents so that, again, personality traits may seem to be "born into" a child when actually they are learned.

It may be reassuring to point out to a youngster that he may look like Uncle Dan and have his mother's good sense of humor, but that he is intrinsically, basically, himself—a combination of some hereditary features, some traits developed in his family, some that are his own, and all adding up to a sum total that makes him a unique individual. Moreover, in spite of the fact that his feet or limbs or nose are like his father's, his height or shape of face or physical skill will not eventually be governed by those features. He will not, in other words, be developing in a predetermined mold. Nutrition, environment, opportunity for individual development will affect his maturation of function and skill, and those are not pre-decided by the set of a jawbone.

A more difficult task in the care of the adolescent's health than either of those mentioned is that of helping him to realize the need for sleep, proper diet, and scheduling of his work so that he does get adequate rest. Nagging doesn't help in other areas, and it's not particularly successful here either. Often the boy or girl who is anxious about a school problem, or feels frustrated or inept in daytime activities, will find it hard to go to bed on time, to eat properly, to cut down on sweets or fats which affect his skin and his weight. Those youngsters who enjoy some aspects of school, who aren't continually pressed for work or achievement at home, do have that certain zest for living which insures healthy physical fatigue, as well as appreciation of a good night's sleep and a good dinner.

A lively enthusiasm for sociability, hobbies, and exercise of whatever sort, however, is far more important than a determination to get to bed on time. Few adolescents really like going to bed. Most of them want to relax—but awake! And we must say, in all fairness, that the sallow-looking, tense, jumpy child who is not sufficiently rested is the one under too much pressure, or laboring under some anxiety that he may not have a chance to talk about. It is exceedingly wise to watch our expectations and demands—not just re-

quests for work, necessarily, but all the *implied* demands for the youngster's future, the expectation that he will conform to standards at home, socially or intellectually, will follow in father's or mother's footsteps, will take a heavy load of responsibility if a parent is ill or away from home. The many health problems of adolescence are not merely colds or sore throats, but the so-called dysfunctions, which may become chronic and which usually arise from worry and tension. Sinus infection, painful menstruation, constant headaches, nausea, nervous tics—all of these may be tied up with the entire health-state of the youngster and more deeply linked with stresses or anxiety.

Therefore, your child may know about food charts, vitamins, required sleep, good skin care, the facts about the menstrual cycle, all the scientific health precautions, but yet, especially in middle and later adolescence, exhibit such troubles, and they may stay with him on into adulthood. He may need (every adolescent does) to talk to a counselor, to a friendly adult, even to his own friends. He may need a statement from you which recognizes the tensions and worries of all adolescents, which, in turn, may lead to a more specific talk about his problems.

Try to concentrate on the positive ways in which he can meet life during the day, the little, probably superficial tricks that may do nothing more than make him feel better or may start a cycle of better rapport with teachers and chums. Adolescents, as their writings or statements show, have some faith in the magic formulas of "counting ten" before getting angry, giving a cheery greeting to someone (forcing it the first few times, if necessary), starting the ball rolling, taking an "insult" with a joke, etc. What is most important, you must realize, is that when the youngster, by his own effort, *goes out* to people or to his work, *he* feels better, they respond, and he finds that the problem of meeting situations *can* be tackled positively. Shy boys and girls especially (and ninety-nine per cent tell you of their dreadful shyness) may be helped to overcome the initial fear of people by the little tricks that have psychological value to the youngster.

Try not to coddle the youngster when he seems tired, by giving him specially fixed food and continually urging him to take vitamins. He needs to realize the importance of proper foods, but don't make a fetish of it. Vitamins are no magic formula to success—and you have to realize that, since the adolescent doesn't! We do *not* mean that you must deprecate his use of one or two "magic" rituals, such as a highly

touted skin soap, hairdressing, or such, but you needn't reinforce his concern about himself. Milk, fruits, vegetables are all essential to growth, but the invalid's meal is not wise or necessary. Like the very young child, the adolescent often likes to have his vegetables uncooked; the "picnic" type of meal is more popular than the evening hot dinner. We've seen adolescents cheer about suppers of salad, a sandwich, hard-boiled eggs, cheese or cheese-spreads, whole tomatoes, olives, carrot-sticks, celery—the very youngsters who refuse the breakfast egg, the casserole, or roast.

Since growing boys and girls show a desire for after-school snacks, we can assume that they need such foods. There are very few adults who don't remember the period of ravenous desire for ice cream, desserts, cakes, pastries, in spite of "balanced" diet at home. It is unfair to expect the youngster to hold in check a wolfish appetite after school, until his dinnertime. Moreover, although we continually point out the advisability of cutting down on sweets to prevent or improve acne, the skin eruptions seem to come from chemical changes rather than from diet. Many girls continue to have pink, baby-clear complexions despite outrageous eating habits, while the pimply-faced youngster may scrub, diet, use lotions of various sorts, and still retain his unfortunate skin condition until later adolescence, when the organism seems to strike a balance and the skin clears. It is unfair to carp too much about diet and food when a youngster needs the reassurance that his physical idiosyncrasies are mainly functions of growth and not due to uncleanness or self-indulgence.

Nor is it helpful to make an adolescent feel that his lethargy or dreaminess or lack of responsibility is the result of late hours. You don't want him to get into the habit of excusing poor work with the idea that he is "tired." He may be tired, but part of that fatigue is the result of growth and new mental and social activity. A youngster often slumps in his work because he feels that he is just a no-good specimen of "bone-laziness," or that something is wrong with him because of the effort it takes to get up, go to school, pay attention to book-tasks and to chores. He wants to do so much, and he often feels he's capable of doing so little. We need to help him realize that he does pack a good deal of activity into a day, that all of us make more effort to be efficient than we show on the surface, and that because of all these factors—plus his new development and growth—he may be in need of rest but he is certainly not unusually "lazy."

FAMILY CRISES

Family crises have different impacts upon adolescents, depending upon their age and stage of maturity, whether they live at home or are away at school or college. Moreover, as in all human situations, the personality of the individual governs in large part the significance of whatever he experiences. Also, different family events or crises have greater or less significance according to the social-economic status of the family members, the location of their home, especially the region in which they live, their cultural traditions, their religious beliefs.

But, granting these differences, crises in family living are usually disturbing to adolescents because the youngsters are already so preoccupied with their own needs and problems that any sudden change in the family situation may come as an unexpected threat to their lives. Adolescents are not necessarily self-centered, egotistical, or selfish when they take the family for granted while in high school or college. They are trying to meet the many new demands—academic, social, personal—that crowd upon them and try their strength and their capacities as never before. They *must* more or less take their families for granted and assume that their parents are carrying on as before. They may write occasionally or not at all, finding correspondence hard to maintain with so little free time and with so much they cannot put into words. For them life is changeable, fluctuating from day to day and week to week, and with these fluctuations their moods may vary; a letter written while “in the dumps” may be completely unreal by the time it reaches home.

It is important to realize these ever-changing feelings and preoccupations when something serious happens in the family; news of it may arrive at a particular time which will give it exaggerated impact.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

As youngsters approach adolescence, very often the burden of financial insecurity in the family is unveiled fully, and perhaps for the first time. Now there is never anything wrong or harmful about telling a boy or girl that we need to budget, to give up luxuries. Even the young child accepts the fact that there are limitations on the family income, *if* you make positive statements or hold discussions about ways and means of obtaining an item he wants—a trip, a party, a birthday gift. “We’ve got to make a choice between this and that.” “Let’s see what we can save on light bills this month.” “What can we do about the food or clothing budget, in order to get your bike?” These attitudes give the child the idea that, with careful planning and discussion, going ahead is possible.

But with the coming of adolescence we may start to give the young person less hopeful attitudes. “We have to scrimp and save so you can go to college.” “You can’t depend on us forever, so you’d better work hard.” Also, we may tend to show our anxieties or quarrels about money in front of the youngster, perhaps even giving him a résumé of worries in the past and for the future. He may see or hear father’s self-criticism or mother’s reproaches and become wide awake to the family discords which spring from financial worries. We may psychologically toss him the ball, showing how helpless and hopeless we feel.

Perhaps this might be called honesty, “facing the hard facts of life,” “learning what it really means to be a parent,” and so on. But it may do some harmful things to a youngster. He sees that a problem has made father and mother bitter and tired-looking. He believes them when they say the future seems black and hopeless. He’d like to alleviate the burden—but what on earth can he do? He’d like to make them feel better by excellent school achievement, but sometimes that is impossible, and most times it means giving up many of the social interests that are his real ties to his agemates and his world. He may resent his parents’ attitudes, though he wants to allay their fears and worries. And he may also ask himself, “Why are they always at it? Why can’t they be happy about life, even if they do have money troubles?” “Why does mother make father feel so miserable about what he earns?” “Why can’t father stop making mother feel she’s a careless housekeeper?”

In spite of his seeming selfishness, the adolescent’s attitude to his parents is not uncaring. He feels his responsibility to

them and wishes desperately that he could iron out their difficulties or that they would stand on their own feet.

It's all very well to be honest about financial difficulties, but to make a youngster feel that he personally is the reason for them negates everything we have taught him about love and marriage, about democratic aims and purposes in life.

Furthermore, parents who have had an unsatisfactory life together, who haven't been able to give or get from each other the assurances they need, may turn to their children for such reassurances. But it is not fair to unload such emotional burdens on a child. Adult frustrations should not be the youngster's responsibility. You may need someone to talk to, someone who can comprehend the intricacies of marriage and family life, but it should not be the bewildered adolescent. He can't spend his life feeling indebted to you; that puts too much burden on a future mate, on the working out of a life-pattern or job of his own.

We are fairly certain that adolescents would immensely prefer parents who took care of themselves, planned and budgeted for their old age and let the youngster fend in large measure for himself, to parents who are so self-sacrificing that they keep the boy or girl tied by obligation and guilt.

Again, of course, we must add that many parents try to needle the child into achievement by reminding him of finances or of the fact that he cannot remain dependent. If, however, he is given opportunities to be independent, if you value independence in other areas, you needn't worry too much about whether he'll be able to support himself or not. When the time comes he'll be as resourceful as the best of his contemporaries.

Now, a sudden financial slump in the family may be a blow to you and your teen-ager—especially since it creates a change in expectations and maybe in living standards. If you make the adolescent feel that this is a disgrace, or rules out all fun, or that now your family is "different," he'll believe you. He'll start blaming (as you may do) his lack of success, socially or scholastically, on lack of family income. "What a difference some nice clothes, or a car, or plenty of money for dates would make!" thinks he.

We may all of us excuse unpopularity or lack of success or unhappiness by blaming them on "the cruel world" or the vagaries of fate. True, our failures may not be our own fault. But there are all too many potential hurts for the adolescent, and it may seem like an easy way out to allay those

hurts by pointing to this or that as the cause: his own body or features, his teachers, another boy or girl, his family's social or financial position. The young child may say, "Everyone hates me," if he's tossed out of a game, or if a teacher criticizes. And the older boy or girl, fearing rejection, may decide that the world is hostile to him. How can he be popular or efficient if there's not enough money?

In parents' middle-aged years illness, poor health, decreased opportunity for advancement in jobs may bring a slow or sudden financial depression in the family. Changes in living costs or employment may pinch different families at different times, but often they pinch hardest in late middle age, when college or vocational training must be paid for, and when the earning capacities of parents may decrease.

Depending upon the boy and girl and their previous relationships with parents, the news that the family cannot afford to let them continue their college careers will evoke different responses. Have you selectively fostered friendships between your adolescent and others which will *really* mean that the young man or woman is "out" if there is a financial crisis? How important are cars, clothes, possessions to him and his friends? Has *your* kind of social life precluded the so-called "simple" pleasures, such as outdoor life, museum-visiting, etc.? Is your household pattern based on the necessity of a maid, expensive parties, "smart" clothing and furniture? In other words, has your son or daughter followed *your* way of depending on costly things in order to win friends and be popular?

You might find out, in financial crisis, what your child has to say in the matter. Perhaps for the first time he'll be happy to admit that this is a good way out of parties and social life—or even a college career, which he has taken on for your sake! Moreover, a new sense of being on his own financially may give him the wonderful feeling that he can be more independent socially. Many youngsters after college very purposefully choose *not* to accept parental allowances, and feel a kind of purity, idealism, and self-sufficiency in living on a shoestring, proving they can do it.

Since college tuition and board are usually paid in advance, a family financial crisis seldom means immediate withdrawal, although occasionally a son or daughter may have to leave college and seek a job without delay. Sometimes it may be possible to continue in the same or another college at less cost—by getting cheaper living quarters, living at home as a day student, getting a self-help job in the college or the com-

munity. Sometimes colleges have student loan funds or scholarships that will pay some or all of the annual costs. There are various alternatives and resources that may be tapped to permit a student to continue his educational program in many cases—not in all. But this is an occasion for reviewing the whole situation, especially the student's own desires and feelings.

It is astonishing to find that sometimes a student welcomes an opportunity to leave college and go to work immediately. Boys and girls go to college for a variety of reasons, personal and family, and after a year or more in college they may no longer be eager to go on or as ready to follow the parental pattern for their futures. Thus lack of finances for college may come as a welcome relief, offering an excellent reason for leaving with no feeling of failure or open admission that college life has been a disappointment, even a sore trial.

FINANCES GOING UP

Perhaps we can't call increased income a financial crisis, but very often parents' financial status progresses so that when children are approaching adolescence there is a shift to a different part of the country, to better living quarters, to a new social group in which children as well as parents will have to make an adjustment. Such a change may provoke anxiety for the youngster who has worked out allegiances to friends in a peer group, and whose social security rests on a satisfactory relationship with them.

Now, it may seem to you that shifts of this kind should not be worrisome. Yet no child—and few families—has gone through years of untroubled times; there have usually been crises before. There have been times that have upset the child's faith in himself or made his adjustment difficult. Illness, lack of physical skill, a problem of so-called social minority, difficulties in school, may make him a bit shaky underneath, despite consequent adjustment and contentment in his group.

A change, therefore, to a new community or neighborhood may revive old worries. Through the school years children learn to modify their language, interests, dress, according to their peer group, which may involve actions that parents think unsuitable for "ladies" or "gentlemen." While a "nicer" home and a "better" community sounds attractive to adults, it may sound threatening to a boy or girl. When you are a

child—or an adolescent—you don't feel that your newness in a classroom or a recreation center is an asset. It usually means being the focus of all eyes, the different one, the stranger as yet unaccepted.

Parents may also provoke anxiety in youngsters by deciding to make a change in the kind of school for them. Most often, then, the crisis for the child comes not so much through the shift itself but through what parents say are their reasons for the change—hopes that the boy or girl will have “nicer” companions, higher standards in schoolwork, that socially the atmosphere will be “better.”

Parents may be right; the change may be a happy one eventually. But parents, no matter how wise, are not always keen judges of what “good” companionship involves for their individual child. They don't always realize that being a “regular” fellow or girl, one of the gang, is far more desirable to a youngster than being proper and correct.

So it is very important not to set up resistance to a new environment by phrasing expectations of change, of school requirements, of new community standards in terms which scare the youngster, make him antagonistic or depressed or vulnerable to criticism in a new group. Nor should he be made to feel ashamed or critical of previous ways of living, of former friendships and allegiances.

The important thing to recognize is the young person's probable disturbance at change. You can emphasize to him that adjustment to a new group may take time, that if he makes some effort of his own he will be able to form friendships in almost any part of the world. It's wise to realize that the adjustment period may be critical—as, for instance, in the college freshman year, when the youngster may become depressed, lose faith in his capacities and in his personality. It's useful to let him know that you understand what is involved and that, given time, he will gain new friends and get back his confidence.

ILLNESS AND DEATH IN THE FAMILY

Adolescence often brings a resurgence of a child's old difficulties and hurts. A childhood incident that caused no great unhappiness (at least on the surface) may in adolescence, when seen in retrospect, suddenly seem very hurtful indeed. Feelings of jealousy, of insecurity, and criticisms of parents

which may have been dormant or disguised, often erupt to astonish the parent and bewilder the youngster.

So the death of a parent or sibling may bring a revival of fears and conflict, a feeling of guilt for unkind thoughts or words which a child had previously directed to that person. Or, on the other hand, the adolescent may feel guilty because he cannot show the grief others in the family consider "normal." A parent, grandparent, sister, or brother may have been loved in the way children love, but not in the way adults love; that is, not with the expectations, intimacy, and mutual support which adults offer one another in their lives together.

So a youngster may show a kind of callousness about a bereaved parent, or about a parent who is chronically ill. He may resent the display of grief, feel disturbed when he is expected to show some overt signs of sadness, too. He may be partly fearful that his own interests will be curtailed, then guilty about such selfishness, and finally resent the adults who make him feel that way. Or, again, a boy or girl may become very responsible, at the same time resenting the conditions or the persons that have caused that responsibility and feeling of obligation.

As in a financial crisis, boys and girls may be expected, in the event of death or serious illness, to take a share of the family burden. Nor need we feel cruel, necessarily, for asking such assistance. But, as with money worries, we cannot let our own dismal view of the future foreshorten the adolescent's view and thereby his hopes. Nor is it wise to impose our own lofty evaluation of a deceased or ailing spouse on the youngster. He may vividly remember incidents of hating the parent for a while, and wishing the parent dead. Grief may be a drain on him, a reminder of guilt and selfishness, and an implied criticism of whatever he finds happy or interesting outside home.

The parents of late adolescents are usually in their forties or fifties and so are more liable to serious illness than when the children were younger. Sudden acute illness or the development of chronic illness into a critical phase occurs frequently. Moreover, grandparents, being a generation older, may suddenly fail or enter upon a lingering illness that brings worry and strain to the parents of these adolescents, who in turn may be disturbed.

The death of a parent, a grandparent, or a close relative may also bring a crisis with many different complications. The sudden termination of a life, even of an aged person, but especially of a parent, may have a peculiar significance

for an adolescent who is, like all adolescents, engaged in working out his or her patterns of living. It is not only the loss of the individual that is disturbing, but often the loss of a personality who at that time (and perhaps for years earlier) has been very important in his life.

As we are beginning to recognize, we derive our ideals, our goals, our image of the kind of person we want to be from personalities who are significant in our early lives. Sometimes the most influential person in a child's life is a grandparent, an uncle, an aunt whom he or she has actually never known except from family talk and reminiscences.

Sometimes the memory of a relative whom the child actually knew is kept alive and cherished because that relative offered the warmth, reassurance, and respect the child needed when he felt, rightly or mistakenly, that his own parents did not love him or trust him.

Even when a parent has been dead for some time, the youngster may realize at adolescence for the first time the full import of his loss. Provocative new problems, especially those of establishing a masculine or feminine role, may provoke a nostalgic and deep need for comfort. With this may come also a criticism or an antagonism to the remaining parent and to his or her ways of doing things. It is far easier to conjure up dreams of an idealized departed parent than to live with and adjust to the demands and rules of the parent who is living.

Here, of course, there may be the additional problem that the young person does not have a living pattern of masculinity or femininity from whom he or she can take some cues as he grows up. A pattern in which only one parent directs the young person's plans and activities may force a parent-child tie which is overstrong for the youngster's healthy development, or overweighted on the feminine or masculine side. The girl or boy with only the mother to manage his or her affairs may feel more resentful of rules that stem from that one source, from that one kind of solicitude; may, in fact, feel that the rules are tougher because there is no second parent to mediate. A father in sole charge of a boy or girl may be blamed for "not caring," for being selfish, when he can't possibly fulfill the functions of two personalities.

Finally, jealousy of a step-parent may hit a new high in adolescence, when a boy or girl feels himself displaced or charges his parent, directly or indirectly, with disloyalty to the deceased mother or father.

In all these adolescent manifestations there is probably

only a greater degree of the normal critical awakening of youngsters to their parents and families. Normally we can expect and understand criticism, jealousy, antagonism. Where death is involved, our own feelings as well as the child's may be more vulnerable; we may be more dependent on and critical of the youngster's attitudes to us. In our own sensitivity to hurt we may ask for the allegiance, obedience, and love which are seldom wholeheartedly exhibited by an adolescent youngster. We may also want a keen understanding of our own adult grief, which is not—or shouldn't be—the adolescent's to give.

It's important also not to confuse the authority in the home—not to have so many relatives and friends giving advice or helping the lone parent direct the youngster's activities that there is really some basis for his criticism, confusion, or nostalgia.

You may need, probably more than in an "ordinary" family, to let the youngster know just how normal are the mixed feelings of adolescents—the dependence now, the independence tomorrow, criticism and restlessness one day, acceptance and pliability the next. You need to be clear on what you can and cannot expect of your youngster at his age. A lone parent may be especially expectant of grown-upness before the boy or girl is really grown-up, maybe because he looks for companionship in the child or has concentrated his hopes on the child's development. Perhaps, lacking the reassurance of a second adult in the family, he is uncertain whether the child's phases of growth are really normal, whether youthful fluctuation in feeling is a sign of deep disturbance, whether the child isn't unduly lacking in intelligence, gumption, ambition.

One parent alone may become so intent on supervising the child's interests, abilities, work habits, friendships, clothing that the youngster becomes sulky and secretive in direct ratio. Incidentally, such close, unhealthy attention is not necessarily the result of absence of a parent. An only child may get that kind of supervision, or a "favorite" child of either parent, or a child who becomes "favorite" in *place* of a parent, where there is marital discord or estrangement.

In general, where one parent is absent, the remaining parent may demand a performance of social and intellectual achievement far out of keeping with the youngster's age or abilities and thereby provoke an undue amount of hostility, which, in turn, may call forth more parental demands, more misunderstanding, greater revolt.

And the danger lies, as it always does, in setting standards

so high that a complete breakdown of loyalty may occur when a youngster can't live up to parental expectation. He may become a problem only because he has no grown-up pattern of relationships to guide him, or no understanding of what his own pattern of growing up involves! *The loss of one parent, then, does not in itself betoken disaster for the adolescent. But the resulting change in the other parent's attitude, with its undue pressure or dependence, may then create a mixed-up situation and provoke problems for parent and child.*

It's quite normal for an adult to be anxious about a child who has lost a parent, and it's quite understandable that the adult, too, becomes withdrawn for a while, perhaps, and unhappy. But it is not wise for the adult to expect a comparable show of grief from the youngster, or to expect that grief, if felt, will be shown openly or directly, or, again, to assume that the young person will try to be good and kind and loving for the sake of the deceased. He may not be able to testify to his feelings in that way; he may need desperately to shut out his feelings, and therefore he will seem, perhaps, only too uncaring!

Remember always, but especially in these situations, that anger, explosions, willfulness, back-talk may be indirect ways of stating loss and deep feeling, and that it is harmful to accuse the boy or girl of heartlessness. He will need other friendly adults, companions of his own age, possibly a good camp experience, a healthy regard for his age and its problems, and your admiration and trust, even more than he would need them in a normal family situation.

Sometimes a parent or grandparent or close relative may develop an acute mental illness and be sent to an institution. Because of the long-standing feeling that mental illness is something to be hidden as shameful, adolescents may be greatly disturbed over this seeming disgrace in the family—a feeling that can be allayed if they are given some wise counsel and advice. But mental illness in the family may also arouse acute anxiety in the adolescent boy or girl, who may often be worried about his own normality and may interpret this occurrence as evidence of a "family taint," a hereditary predisposition to become "crazy."

While there is some evidence of inherited susceptibility to mental disorders, this is limited to a few specific forms of mental illness. Accordingly, most of the "nervous breakdowns" and the other more frequent forms of mental illness need not be considered as threats to the mental stability of

the children. Many of the cases among older individuals, such as grandparents, are symptoms of senescence, the wearing out or breakdown coming from old age.

In almost every case of mental disorder the boy or girl needs some explanation and reassuring advice to allay unnecessary worry and to provide understanding of what the illness means.

DIVORCE AND MARITAL SEPARATION

The termination of a marriage between parents with adolescent children is usually not a sudden event. It is a final step in a series of family events, wherein feelings and conflicts that have existed for a long time are now acknowledged and translated into action. Parents who have been unhappy together often postpone separation or divorce until the children are older, when the children are expected to accept their parents' parting with less disturbance.

It is sometimes a great surprise to parents to discover that the children have long been aware of the marital situation, even though the husband and wife may have been trying to appear as if all were serene. Children are rarely deceived about their family life, and, while they may not be able to put it into words, they "feel" what is going on.

Adolescents, being more or less critical of their parents and troubled because their family does not live up to the ideal family they believe in, are especially sensitive to their parents' conduct. They may take sides and feel loyal to the father or mother. Frequently the boy may express his current reaction against his father by taking the mother's side (even though he may not really admire or believe in her side), and likewise the girl may express strong admiration for her father, regardless of his merits in the family conflicts, because she is reacting against her mother as part of her effort to become an independent young woman.

Whatever the adolescent may say or do, the full meaning of the separation or divorce to the boy or girl may not be disclosed. He—or, especially, she—may have very conflicting feelings and judgments but be unable or unwilling to reveal them.

We have known several divorced families in which one parent convinced the children that the other parent had been cruel, neglectful, wicked, and hated the children. The children, in their adolescent mix-up, took sides, usually with the parent with whom they lived. The missing parent was hurt

and often took out bitterness by alternating between kindness and disdain toward the children.

The parent who does not live with the child is likely to feel that the child reflects the feelings of the other parent, and attempts to punish him as he would the spouse, withdrawing financial support, talking destructively of the other parent. Or he tries to "woo" the child and then unburdens his own unhappiness on him. Children quickly withdraw from this rather lover-like attitude.

Here the adolescent may also become rather wily and opportunistic in getting what he wants, and may seem to have no true sense of values about human beings. He may become insatiable for attention from other adults or from other boys and girls. Or he may become a destructive person, with habits of deprecating, tearing down other people's confidence.

A good boarding school may be the best place for such mixed-up children, provided the school understands their needs. And some mature, wise assistance in understanding the boy's and girl's feelings and growth may be what the separated parents need.

We suggest, too, counsel for the adolescent by an adult whom he can trust and who has had experience with adolescents—clear-cut help about himself and his capacities without interference by either parent.

One peculiar part of this parent-adolescent circuit is that the adolescent seems to want to hurt the absent parent in order to get proof that he is loved. Each time he sees this parent he tries out some remark or piece of behavior that he knows, in a deep part of him, will be irritating or provoke punishment. The helpful parent might see his behavior for what it is, try to change it, but not resent it as being directed toward him. (This often happens in the "normal" family, too. A child again and again provokes a younger sibling or a parent when he knows it will be irritating. Often he is trying to hurt a parent because the parent seems so all-wise, so authoritative, so powerful.) Here, too, a parent needs to step down from his high horse of pride and try to talk not as an authority but as one person to another.

What is of major importance is that the break-up of the adolescent's family should not make him cynical or pessimistic at this particular age when he is trying to clarify his beliefs and his hopes for the future. Girls especially are liable to be hurt, because often their father, rightly or wrongly, is blamed for the family trouble and considered the cause of

the divorce, and with that feeling may go a direct or implied condemnation of all men, a conviction that they cannot be relied upon, and so forth. This may make the girl worried, uncertain, even fearful of men, and hesitant about marriage at the very time when she needs to be courageous, hopeful, and capable of playing her role as a young woman toward young men.

It has been observed that girls who live with their mothers after a divorce become exceedingly hostile to their mothers and express either openly or in various disguised ways strong feelings of resentment at being deprived of their father. What happens, apparently, is that the girl idealizes the absent father, regardless of whether this is deserved or not, and begins to feel that the mother has been unfair and has robbed her of her father. These feelings arise from the need of the young girl for a father person at this specific stage in her personality development, when she must accept the feminine role and accordingly looks to the father for the approval and reassurance she acutely needs.

Adolescents need a kind of reassurance and counseling different from what younger children need. This is not easy to find, since they often run into moral judgments upon the parents instead of being helped to realize that their parents may be suffering from the confusion and the frequent mental conflicts that almost all men and women are now exposed to in today's life. Adolescents need someone to talk over the family drama, to listen to their doubts and questionings, their desire to be fair, and their equally strong need to clarify their own ideas and resolve the conflict of loyalties that may be tearing them apart.

While these family disturbances are going on it may be impossible for the student to give any concentrated attention to class work or even to carry on the usual routine of living. Some boys and girls, however, can go through a family break-up without seeming to be affected in the least, either having given up long ago any concern for their parents or being able to "take it" because by now they have become callous and are not deeply moved by anything.

It must never be forgotten that adolescents are often very critical of their families because they want to be proud of them, and they feel their parents should be more like "the" family of the ideal. Thus, when there is a divorce or some scandal in the family they may be acutely unhappy and worried, especially over what their agemates will think about them.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Throughout childhood, and on until the time each boy or girl gets his own job or marries, you may find periodic or continual strife between children, open quarreling or sly taunts, a small ruckus or a big row, which makes you wonder about the efficacy of any kindness, any patience or tact.

Just before adolescence, and until its middle years, you may find new, more intense, more troublesome feuds developing from time to time. It isn't hard, if you've read any of the previous discussions, to arrive at a reason for such new hypersensitivity and battles of wills. The adolescent is outlining himself as a distinct, new individual. A brother or a sister, as well as parents, is a reminder of duties, allegiances, obligations, childhood relationships, and quarrels. He brings back memories of deprivations, punishments, frustrations, denials, of having had to give things up, to share. Furthermore, children have an uncanny ability to sense their parents' faults and anxieties, their brothers' or sisters' weak points, and to aim their taunts and teasing remarks where they'll hurt most. The closer people are or have been, the more neatly they can hurt one another as if, being masters of disguise themselves, they know where others wear their armor and why they put it on!

For the adolescent his brothers and sisters are devastating observers and consequently potential destroyers of the new self he is trying to be. If a girl wears lipstick, talks to friends on the phone in her most charming manner, gets a letter from a friend, changes her hairdo, her little brother may evoke intense anger and upset by his not too complimentary remarks. An older brother may acquire a new sophistication in talking about his boy friends or girl friend, may affect a secretive attitude at home, but his sister slices into that privacy by observations on the "silly" antics of his crowd.

Sisters and brothers can also hurt each other in more subtle ways. The younger may play up to parents' expectations, sensing that this will insure acceptance and knowing that it hurts the older child deviously and perhaps makes him less popular with the adults. Or each child may feel that he is less desirable in his parents' eyes than the other one, and so want to show up the other's faults and inferiorities.

FAVORITISM

Antagonism and rivalry are not unusual or abnormal at any age. They express the need of each child to be recognized for his or her own individual self. But, as parents know, when we do show favoritism or give praise to one child for virtues we want the other child to display, we are telling the less favored child what he hopes may not be true: that he must gain acceptance by being someone else.

Parents may say at this point, "But we never show favoritism; that's nonsense. We lean over backward trying to be fair." Alas, many of our feelings are not determined by objective situations. You go into a group where the conversation or the social atmosphere or the professional standing of the people makes you feel ignorant and inferior. Evaluated for yourself, you are a good musician, a good cook, a fine mother or father, a keen thinker. But in the present situation those attributes don't stand out, or they seem inconsequential.

So it is with the adolescent. He may have many fine qualities of varying kinds, which are appreciated by a friend, perhaps, by a teacher in one area of school work, or by another adult, and he seeks friends who will like and appreciate him. At home, however, each family member must balance his own needs and interests against those of the other persons in the family. Each one may be accepted as he is but not given the special man-to-man recognition he gets outside with his friends. Each person must curtail or alter his own desires and interests occasionally, for the good of everyone.

Since we must try to revise expectations in a child's adolescence, let's make an assay and survey, not just of what we demand or expect overtly but of what values are *implied* indirectly in our specific families. For example, both parents in a family are quiet and contemplative, love the woods and hiking, days spent out in the open, and so on. Jazz, movies, popular love stories are outside their interests—not disapproved of, necessarily, but not included in their activities. One daughter grows into adolescence with an equal love for nature. Another daughter may love to dance, love soap operas, know the names of all the movie stars and their private affairs, and, for a time, go all out for swing music. While the child's parents don't frown upon these things, still she sees that her older sister can talk with them at greater length on common-interest topics, that her older sister's friends are accepted with genuine interest at home, for they, too, fit

into the home pattern of conversation and leisure-time hobbies.

Now, the second child may feel left out occasionally. She's on the defensive about her friends and pursuits; she's a little hesitant in talking about what she likes. She may shortly start disturbing the family equilibrium by gibing at her sister's "high-falutin" interests, by making uncomplimentary remarks about her parents' undramatic, "stodgy" life. Her parents may say, "We let her live her life. We don't interfere. What's the matter with her?"

The youngster, of course, may feel that she's different from her admired parents, a black sheep; that her tastes are a little lower than the standards at home. These are the reasons for her defensive feelings. Often parents can, without straining themselves or denying their own interests, broaden their fields of experience when youngsters get to the adolescent age. They can admit ignorance on various subjects, but they can show inquiring minds and an eagerness to know what is new and different in magazines, music, motion-picture entertainment.

The adolescent, in his new and greater attempts to be recognized outside of home, feels the pull and the weight of the familiar home group. He feels its boundaries more keenly—on his freedom, on his own personality reflected in what other members expect of him and have expected of him in the past. Perhaps the only good policy for parents is to give each youngster a private time occasionally to help him feel that they do recognize and respect what he is and what he is striving for. Telling him that he is understandably, normally taxed and tantalized by a younger or older brother or sister, and trying to explain that his response is a function of his feeling of individuality and his need to grow up, may make him believe that you accept his growing maturity and are sensitive to his needs. He probably needs to understand himself before he can understand brothers and sisters, to know that you are fully conscious of these greater demands and expectations he faces, and that *you* don't underestimate his potentialities or resent the outward forms of behavior which indicate emotional growth. Of course, one gripe he may have is "Why do I have to have *him* [or her] for a brother [or sister]?" It's hard for an adolescent to recognize the interlocking of personalities, the subtle circular responses and adjustments which make up family relationships, and to realize that the combination of human responses can produce irritation as

well as satisfactions. It's difficult for him to understand that a sister or brother may have a deep admiration for him and a real need for his kind words.

GETTING ATTENTION

Sometimes even parents don't fully see the underlying admiration or devotion that makes a youngster doubly vulnerable to hurt from the admired brother or sister. But often an outsider can detect, even where rivalry runs high and constantly, the underlying want of a child to get recognition from another child in the family. Unfortunately his method of attracting such attention, like most attention-getting, may be provoking and even obnoxious. To attract attention, usually, instead of putting ourselves in the other fellow's shoes, we stand in our own shoes and stamp really hard.

In the family, with our present emphasis on understanding children and their feelings, we are likely to recognize or emphasize the so-called destructive feelings of jealousy or anger (simply because those feelings may provoke attention) and then forget to recognize and show our children that we also see their positive attitudes.

So when brothers and sisters needle one another it seems extremely important that they be given the opportunity to feel hostile, but that they recognize in themselves *and* in one another the positive needs that may give rise to the negative feelings.

In our discussion of brothers and sisters, too, we have to emphasize again the importance to the adolescent of a feeling of positive contribution both to the world and to his family. We have to help him see that, if he can make an effort at this point or that point during the day, to understand and give some attention to a brother or sister, we will then try to protect his interests and needs from violation in the family. Your own direct statement of recognition of a child's worth (and it must be accompanied by sincere effort to give houseroom to differences) will probably be the cushion of security the youngster needs to act generously and kindly.

You have to remember that, while the children in one family quarrel bitterly because each one feels himself the "goat" or black sheep, in another family a young boy or girl may not show this open hostility. Instead he tries other ways of getting the recognition he needs. Such a boy or girl

may become mother's solace and comfort, father's pride, by taking over certain responsibilities or choosing a career or displaying behavior and manners that get him adult approval. Yet, because an older sister becomes mother to the little ones, all-accepting rather than occasionally resentful and quarrelsome, we cannot assume that she will be, in the long run, more appreciated and accepted in her own group.

CONTRADICTIONS IN PARENTS

Then again, rivalry in one family may go on for years without any resolution of the conflict, without any one child's really feeling he has gained status. And, conversely, hostility or quarreling in the family next door may be resolved in later years into good, sound, happy brother-sister relationships. It may very well be that in the first instance the parents don't put many pressures on the children to follow the family standards in friendships, deportment, excellence in school, until the adolescent years; and perhaps it is then that a young person begins to resent the advantages which the younger or older child enjoys. It may be in those critical years, too, that parents begin to show the favoritism, direct or indirect, that makes one child bitter. It is really astonishing, when we examine ourselves, to find that there are contradictions between what we expect of children in their earlier years and what we praise or extol later on. For example, you want obedience when a child is young and you give praise and reward for it. Later, in the early adolescent years, the child who was continually disobedient may be praised for his "spunk," "spirit," etc. Meanwhile the conformist in the family continues to conform, goes to bed on time, tries to help mother and dad, but observes, with not a little resentment, that when friends or relatives come to visit there's a good deal of admiring talk about her "vivacious, gregarious, resourceful" brother.

It is not at all unusual to find that "prodigal" sons or daughters are given more attention than the meek, docile, helpful youngsters. Perhaps it's a human tendency, rather than just a parental one, to give more praise to the returned, reformed black sheep than to the lamb who has always kept in line. At any rate, time and time again you see emerging from the cocoon of early shyness and docility a rather bitter, maybe expositive, possibly sulky or aggressive pubertal boy or girl who feels he has tried hard and not been appreciated.

Over and over you read parents' questions or hear discussions in which adults admit that a boy or girl has become so unlovable that they just can't like him! He's obnoxious to everyone. Occasionally you hear a parent say, "Now he's showing us what he's really like inside. I didn't think any child of mine could be so nasty." The defenses put up in life are so often disguises, tragic attempts to deal with the world, to keep a balance, to be "somebody," that it is no wonder others—even parents—cannot understand what lies behind such behavior. But you'll also hear parents comment on the manner in which an adolescent will burst into sobs at a loving touch on the shoulder, or the immense amount of wistfulness or feeling he'll display to an understanding word or statement.

You can appeal to youngsters for help, especially to adolescents, if you're not afraid of their feelings or comments. You'll find that the oldest child who has had special difficulties at school, in athletics, or with his social group, and has been given an immense amount of help of various sorts, will nevertheless pick on a younger sister who seems outwardly more competent and less in need of parental help. While he may not show rivalry until he is almost in the adolescent years, yet his feelings of resentment go back to earlier days. Meanwhile the younger one, besieged by rude remarks, may be hurt deeply. It may be necessary to appeal directly to the older child, explaining that his sister may seem to him more competent, that perhaps he does not want to hurt her, but that no one can take that kind of protracted hurt and still feel happy or satisfied with life. You can explain privately that perhaps he doesn't see how she also must need expectations and demands, and that she cannot possibly feel competent if his actions continually undermine her faith in herself. You can make an agreement that you will also try to help the younger one "keep out" when the adolescent wants privacy.

You need to be the adult, and by this we mean not just an authoritarian figure. You have to be human, be a person, be sure of your values to your child, be secure in the realization that showing hurt or anger isn't harmful *when you can also be just as outspoken about your own feelings of kindness, understanding, love, generosity*. Remember that children may see in their parents only the "righteous" anger; they may think of you as supremely confident—in nothing but hard authority. The delicate nuances of faith, hope, and charity are less easily seen in parents unless you can express, however

haltingly, those feelings in human terms, and let your child see you are not unaware of his worth in the family, with brothers and sisters, and in other life situations.

COMING HOME FROM SCHOOL OR COLLEGE

It may seem strange to speak of a visit home by an adolescent boy or girl as a family crisis, but sometimes these visits are exceedingly disturbing, both to the family and to the adolescent.

Some young children are accustomed to going away, to summer camp, on a long visit to relatives, or to boarding school, and these absences and returns usually do not bring any major changes. The child is still a child, with the same images and interests and much the same relationships to his family. But in the period of adolescence these occasions may give rise to stress and strain, and parents might be wisely forewarned. Leaving home for any extended period often has a dual meaning for the adolescent. He may be excited and full of anticipation at going off by himself, since it means more than anything else that he is growing up. At the same time, however, he may be very much aware that the reassurance and the close personal relationships of home are even more precious now that he is to be deprived of them. All of us tend to build up a more or less idealized picture of the family from which we are absent, emphasizing the pleasant and comforting aspects and overlooking those about which we have often complained and been resentful.

Returning home, then, after an absence, the adolescent may come with high hopes and expectations and, after the excitement of arrival, begin to feel somewhat uncomfortable, if not dismayed. This is almost inevitable, because in the first place it is impossible to maintain the first "fine rapture" of the homecoming. But, more important, the adolescent himself has changed. His meetings with new people and new experiences have given him a somewhat different image of himself and a new and sharpened awareness of his family as well as of his altered relationships to his parents.

It is hard for both the parents and the adolescent to realize these changes, and the family efforts to welcome the adolescent and to share his new life away from home may, instead of re-establishing his old place and relationships, only increase his sense of isolation and disappointment.

Thus, strange as it may seem, the return may become an occasion for the adolescent's growing up even more than his experience away from home. The reason is that he *has* been away from home, and for a time more or less cut off from his former way of life and familiar associations with the family, and he can and does feel the difference in himself and has to see his family and feel toward them in new ways.

It is especially important that parents do not reproach the adolescent and make him feel guilty over what may be a highly significant period of growing up. Indeed, if they will stop to think, this young person, who while at home has a variety of engagements outside the family circle, is becoming a young adult, establishing himself on a new basis with the family. If parents feel unhappy and sometimes actually disturbed by this, they should remember that it may be equally difficult for the adolescent to come home and find that he no longer can fit into his old childhood role.

Sometimes the visit home by an adolescent creates family conflicts because the younger brothers and sisters find it difficult to accept this somewhat strange and aloof individual who no longer enters into the old familiar patterns of brother-and-sister relationships. Nothing can be more infuriating to an adolescent than the gibes and teasing of younger children, especially since they can so often undermine if not completely deflate the painful efforts to be more grown-up and to wear a new dignity. This reaction of the younger children to the adolescent is an understandable one, because they feel left out and cannot understand why suddenly an older brother or sister should be so distant and unwilling to carry on the old relationships. In these situations parents can sometimes be very helpful by reassuring the younger children and helping them to recognize that the older brother or sister has new and different interests and must be accepted as growing up. Sometimes, without realizing it, the parents may actually provoke these conflicts by the way they themselves act and speak toward the adolescent. Therefore it is of considerable importance for parents to be somewhat aware of their own attitudes and to make every effort to protect the older child from unnecessary teasing and irritation, and at the same time to reassure the younger children.

WHAT KIND OF EDUCATION DO ADOLESCENTS NEED?

This question has become one of the "hot issues" of our time. Professional educators, teachers, scholars, scientists are arrayed in many camps, with citizens, religious organizations, and parent groups criticizing and defending, protesting and urging. These controversies are not solely concerned with school programs and professional problems of education. They have become the focus for strong, and consequently conflicting convictions, about social, economic, political, and religious questions. While the disputes seem to be over what should be taught and how to run our schools, frequently these are but occasions on which people express their own personal hopes and fears, their loyalties and their expectations.

This is almost unavoidable, because we are not educating our children for life in a vacuum. They are growing up to live in our society, and today we are uncertain about what is happening in our society. What we personally cherish we want to see maintained and carried on. There is no question of the sincerity of the great majority of people engaged in these arguments, although there are some who for their own profit are stirring up controversy and impugning the good faith of educators, members of school boards, and so forth. When thoughtful observers of our educational programs say that our children are being educated for a way of life that no longer exists, they are not speaking as irresponsible radicals advocating any specific kind of social change. They mean that we adults ourselves are involved in the immense task of developing a new way of life: science and technology are compelling us more and more to alter our customary patterns of thinking, acting, and relating ourselves to others. They then point to the lags in education, wherein we focus chiefly

on the past and teach what is often out of date by methods which are no longer valid or effective. In consequence, many of our boys and girls grow up to face a new and strange world created by our bold experimentation in science, industry, and organization. Children's education may not have prepared them for living in this world; indeed they may have been drilled in ways of thinking and acting that will handicap them individually and make them collectively an obstacle to growth in our society.

We parents should try to grasp the basic questions that are so often ignored or distorted when these educational disputes rage. Naturally every critic or proponent in education asserts that he is concerned with the fundamentals, and he states them with the conviction that he, and he alone, knows what is important. But in the midst of these different arguments one cannot but wonder what is truly significant, especially when we keep in the center of our thinking the children for whom the various prescriptions are intended. We shall not try to evaluate these disputed issues, but rather attempt to state what seems to be relevant for the adolescent's development and maturation.

We must recognize clearly that a healthy, strong nation means healthy, strong personalities capable of bearing the burdens of freedom, able to handle the responsibilities and privileges of adult living in an expanding social order. This statement, if taken seriously, means that we cannot use young people as instruments for various purposes, however lofty and urgent these purposes may seem to various groups. In some educational discussions we hear passionate pleas for programs designed to make everyone think, act, and feel alike. Or we hear vehement denunciations of educational programs concerned with all the different boys and girls of the nation instead of concentrated upon training an elite group of scholars and scientists. Sometimes it seems as if there were at least one common belief among these contending educators: education should make everyone into someone like me! This applies to many nonprofessionals who, as leading citizens in business and politics, regard education as a way of maintaining the world as they like to see it and deal with it.

Public education developed in the United States largely because families could no longer provide training adequate for children who would be living in a different world from their parents. This expectation that we shall always be changing, that things will be different and, we hope, better for the

next generation, is almost basic to the American way of life. Also, we parents do our utmost to make it possible for our children to go further in formal education than we did, even sometimes pushing a child into college when he doesn't want to go. As a nation we spend on formal education an ever increasing share of our national income, and we must now greatly enlarge these expenditures if we are to provide for the growing numbers of children coming to our schools.

The current situation in high schools, where the controversies are most acute, shows how the different conceptions of education give rise to very different programs. Parents of adolescents should be aware of the issues involved and able to recognize when criticisms and proposals are genuinely concerned with children and youth and when they are being pushed for other purposes. This means keeping focused upon what will help adolescents, viewed not as a large number of robots to be regimented, of empty minds to be filled with the fruits of scholarship. Adolescents are living personalities, each different, but facing much the same life tasks, perplexed by the same issues and demands. They are eager to live in the grown-up world and learn the varied patterns and practices of adult living.

Perhaps the most significant impact upon the education of youth is the steady stream of experiences *outside* the schools. Not only is the growing boy or girl today, beginning at an early age, exposed to the teachings of home, school, church, and his immediate neighbors; he now hears and sees radio, television, comics, movies, tabloids, picture magazines, science fiction, and the variety of magazines which give the latest news of Hollywood, sports, and different technologies. Never before have adolescents been subjected to such a barrage of entertainment, propaganda, instruction, advertising, plus an extraordinary amount of sound and useful information. The teen-ager is also involved in out-of-school activities offered by the many youth agencies, religious organizations, camps, and community centers. In addition to these, he has a wide choice of activities, social and special-interest clubs, associated with his school but not ordinarily considered an official part of his school program. In some communities there is an active, sometimes competitive, solicitation of boys and girls by different organizations.

One important aspect of this is that most young people today are living a life of intense activity, participating vicariously, through movies, radio, TV and printed matter, in all our adult activities—romance, conflicts, tragedies, and not a

little sex stimulation. To discuss their formal education without taking into account these unofficial educational influences is academic and unreal. A lot of these communications are aimed at youth by noneducators, many of them socially irresponsible, intent only upon selling their products. But obviously our children are exposed to and learning something from them; what they are learning we are not quite sure, although we are told that radio, TV, comics, and so on are responsible for our adolescents' misbehavior, for delinquency, crime, drug addiction, sexual misconduct.

Without entering into this controversy, let us acknowledge that our children, and especially our teen-agers, are exposed to a wide range of experience, good and bad, and most of it is unrelated to and usually ignored by schools. So the teen-ager is learning, often most vividly, from a variety of unrelated experiences. Let us look briefly at the ways he is learning about the world and himself.

First there is the home and family, as we have shown, providing the first and the most immediate experiences, shaping much of the child's and the adolescent's personality development. Then there is the church with its teachings, its claim upon the teen-ager's loyalty and acceptance of its message. Then there is the school as an agency for formal teaching and supervision in a growing number of areas—art, dance, drama, athletics, shop work, vocational training, and so on. The school is also a social center around which revolves the teen-age peer group, often split into a number of cliques, clubs, fraternities, and sororities. Then there are the national youth agencies with their programs, Boy and Girl Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, the YMs and YWs, etc., plus all the local organizations, boys' and girls' clubs, social centers, youth canteens. Then there is frequently a variety of well-knit youth groups which meet and carry on their activities outside of any official or adult supervision. Finally we have the whole array of mass-media impacts described earlier, coming from publishers, broadcasters, advertisers.

No one examining this situation can deny that the adolescent today is living in a number of separate worlds, each expecting, demanding, or provoking different and usually conflicting behavior, different ways of thinking, of feeling, of relating himself to others. He must, alone or in his small group, try to make some sense of it all. We forget that the adolescent is being approached by a large number and variety of adult advisers and agents of different organizations, each offering a different appeal and seemingly competing with others

for attention and acceptance. We must admit that the adolescent may be puzzled and confused by these adults who are so concerned with their message but seem to have no interest in what he wants to know and hopes to do. As one teenager has said, "Everyone talks to me, but no one listens to me."

When we remember the immense effort in time and money, the personal devotion of adults in providing youth programs and guidance, it may seem unfair and ungracious to appear to criticize them. But if we are to focus on the needs of young people we cannot ignore the fact that the multiplicity of programs and conflicting experiences to which they are exposed is an acute problem. Adolescents badly need help in coping with this incessant barrage. If we are to avoid censorship of mass communications we should provide in our schools specific programs which will develop in our children a critical awareness of what these many conflicting impacts mean and some resistance to their impacts. It is important for social order that students be able to evaluate the things they experience in radio, TV, newspapers, comics, journals and advertising, as they are taught to evaluate the literature of the past.

Many parents may also be baffled by the sheer number and variety of these programs, organized and unorganized, especially when they feel that out-of-home experiences and the many youth agencies are actively competing with the home for the child's time and energies. Parents are perplexed by the many campaigns for funds in their community as each agency puts on a drive for increased funds, new buildings, enlarged facilities, and, at the same time, conducts a vigorous promotion for more members. There are few communities today, large or small, where parents and citizens have found a way of providing for their youth without this multiplicity of program and rivalry.

If the young people are confused and feel beset by these various efforts to enlist their interest, they are also often perplexed and disturbed by the discrepancies in our traditions which we adults have learned to accept or tolerate, to live with for a variety of "good" reasons. As we have said earlier, young people are much more serious-minded, much more concerned with finding some basis or reason for what they believe and do than are adults. When they begin to wonder, to seek some clarification, they discover that in our traditions are all manner of irreconcilable conflicts, of contradictions that may deeply worry them. Our children take

seriously the teaching and preaching they have received from adults, the stories of idealistic heroes, of right triumphing over wrong, of people devoted to the highest aims. Having inculcated such ideas and aspirations in our children, we are upset and sometimes angry when they cite them as support for their criticisms of the world, as sanctions for their burning desire to reform it.

A boy or girl may learn in a variety of ways from early years that sex is a tabooed subject, that anything connected with sex is not nice, often considered nasty or wicked, that genitals and reproductive processes are sources of embarrassment, even of shame or disgust. Few children, even in "enlightened" families which have rejected such teachings, wholly escape this traditional attitude that sex is naughty. As they grow up, they see on every side advertisements of sexually provocative images, urging girls and women and even men to appear as sexually attractive and glamorous as possible; they hear of the sexual misbehavior of people, read the scandal in the newspapers, view the TV and movie dramas about sex. Then, as they become a little older, they read in our great novels, poetry, drama, and, of course, current fiction, about love between a man and woman who seek and find the greatest happiness in marriage, now clearly recognized by the teen-ager as involving sex relations. How do they reconcile these two discrepant views, especially those young people whose early life was filled with dire warnings about the evil of sex? Where does the adolescent find help in clarifying his confusions and developing a more wholesome orientation to marriage? We adults are frequently torn with these conflicts, and our attempts to teach adolescents do not seem to be very effective, probably because we are more concerned with our own personal beliefs and feelings than with their need to be encouraged to talk out their confusions.

A review of our traditions will show many similiar conflicts which previous generations have been able to live with and to reconcile without too much anxiety. But today our young people seem less willing or able to accept statements that these are perplexities we cannot hope to solve but must live with. In times past young people and adults lived in a community that shared much the same beliefs and expectations, cherished much the same goals and aspirations. In such a like-minded community it was not too difficult to accept what others said and believed, especially since one rarely heard any dissents; people with different beliefs did

not ordinarily associate together. But now our young people are growing up in communities that are highly diversified, going to school with the sons and daughters of people with many different traditions, including different ideas of what is masculine or feminine, of the meaning of sex and love and family life. Likewise, young people, whether rightly or wrongly, are inclined to believe that many ideas of the past are largely verbalism without much meaning or relation to life. "Yes," they say, "we are told to love our neighbors, to be kind and generous to others, but we see people trying to beat others, to get theirs, to drive the hardest bargains, use any means to be successful." Of course this criticism is not new; we have never lived up to our ideals. But young people are wondering whether we believe in them at all. Their doubt is understandable when we see what they are exposed to on all sides.

Our adolescents, we must never forget, are looking at us parents, teachers, adults in general, with critical eyes—more critical than ever before. They are genuinely altruistic and concerned about the state of the world, but they find it hard to tolerate what they observe going on around them. Many take refuge in cynicism, which is usually the expression of frustrated idealism, a cover for disappointment and often for loss of hope.

Here we must again state that the churches, the youth agencies, the schools in many areas are not unaware of or silent on these issues. What is to be emphasized is that young people, hearing so many separate and uncoordinated teachings, are apparently not finding what they need and are earnestly seeking as orientation to adult life. Assuming, as we do, that most adolescents are good in the sense of having aspirations and genuinely wanting to learn to live as responsible adults (this does not deny the many delinquents, the neurotics, the anti-social), then we should ask what kind of educational program can be provided to help these potentially good citizens to mature, to resolve their perplexities and learn to be self-disciplined personalities. What can parents, as parents and as citizens, legitimately expect the schools to do in this current situation? Will the parents who expect the schools to do more be ready to join with other parents to help the schools provide such programs? Despite the attacks and often legitimate criticisms of the schools, we must remember that school people—administrators, supervisors, teachers—are usually able and eager to provide much better education for our children than we will let them provide. We

not only shrink from paying the necessary costs but tolerate or even support various agencies and organizations that, for reasons they consider valid, block necessary improvements in the schools. To say that the schools are often a political football, an arena for religious rivalries, a target for business interests that resist paying taxes, a focus for racial and intercultural conflicts, as well as the occasion for disputes among educators, is to recognize what is being said in almost every community today. But it is fair to ask: would the schools be so misused if parents were genuinely concerned with the education of their children, especially their adolescents, and as parent-citizens demanded—they can and should—schools that would deal more effectively with the needs of our troubled young people? Where citizens have committed themselves to the schools and served notice upon these warring factions to let the schools alone, they have gained good schools.

So long as we assume that the deviant adolescents, the delinquents of various kinds, the vandals who destroy school equipment, the drug addicts, the sexual offenders, the gangsters, the auto thieves, the many other examples of human wastage and defeat, are exceptional cases that can be blamed on the homes and families or denounced as irreligious and anti-social, we shall worry along, with spurts of indignation and civil zeal. But when—and we hope it may not be very long—we begin to realize that our children are being demoralized by the situation, then we shall have to recognize the present lack of any coherent, integrated plan of education for our adolescents. Before we can act intelligently we must be better informed about our schools and try to decide what we want them to do and how we can help them to do it. A central question is how we will regard the schools for teenagers in the midst of all the other agencies and programs. Can we see the schools as the publicly supported and socially sanctioned agency for youth, as the integrating core through which will function all the resources of new knowledge and understanding of the various professions which can conserve and develop our precious human resources of youth?

To clarify our thinking about the school and what it can and should provide, we should be aware of how high schools have been changing and what they are trying to do today. An understanding of high-school programs is essential to any parent who is concerned about his boy and girl, since so much of their living centers in the school and is carried on with their age groups, usually their schoolmates. Obviously there are millions of boys and girls who do not go to high school or

drop out early—sometimes, according to various studies, because the high-school program is not responsive to their needs or suitable to their capacities. Here we are concerned with those who do go to high school and what their parents should realize about school programs and school living.

MORE CHILDREN AND NEW PROBLEMS

Education in our country has been going through an extraordinary variety of change since the turn of the century. In what is known as secondary education—secondary in the sense of coming after primary education in the elementary school—we can see how astonishing these changes have been over the past forty or fifty years. A brief look at the figures shows the extent of such changes and indicates some of the difficulties we face in public education. In 1900 only eleven of every hundred boys and girls attended high school; in recent years more than 75 per cent of youngsters of high-school age attended. At the beginning of the century, then, the high schools had a limited enrollment of children—mostly boys—who attended such schools as a necessary step toward college and the several professional schools. Those who went to high school were a small, select group, attending primarily for the college preparatory courses of study, and the high school offered only a limited number of courses, designed largely, if not exclusively, for this purpose. But today as many girls as boys attend high school, and in some cases they outnumber boys. In 1953-54 about 26 per cent of the age group from eighteen to twenty-one were attending college, as compared with only 4 per cent in 1900. More boys and girls are going to college than ever before. In the years ahead, it is already clear, the high schools will be overwhelmed by the large number of adolescents who are now crowding the elementary schools.

Fifty years ago the high school offered a relatively small group of studies, long-recognized subjects such as Latin, Greek, mathematics, English, one or more foreign languages, and history. Subjects that were required for admission to college were considered to be the basis, if not the full meaning, of so-called liberal education, and were deemed adequate preparation for whatever professional work an individual student might pursue.

To sum up, the high schools of that period were few in number, with a student body that was only a very small frac-

tion of the teen-age children. They provided only one kind of educational program, and relatively few girls attended. We must remember what this situation was in order to realize what has taken place within the past two or three decades.

Today compulsory-education laws require children to attend school until sixteen, or even eighteen in some states; child-labor laws restrict their employment so that more and more boys and girls are going to high school. While some high schools still offer much the same classical programs as before, for the most part we can no longer speak of *the* high school. There are many different kinds of high schools today, offering diversified courses of study. What is perhaps more important, many schools provide what is now being called "terminal education," that is, a program which is not preparatory to college or further study, but will provide the final formal education for most of its students, with emphasis on vocational training.

Therefore, in more and more communities we find a number of high schools, each with its own specific program—such as a junior high school, or specialized vocational schools. In many cases these are fairly large institutions that provide for thousands of pupils a number of quite different programs, all in the same building.

The schooling of these many teen-agers with a wide range of capacities and goals, coming from such different families, neighborhoods, socio-economic backgrounds, and traditions, has created innumerable controversies and conflicts in our communities. College teachers concerned primarily in training students in the arts and sciences, providing what is known (but defined differently by every writer) as a liberal education, are dismayed by the rise of high schools which openly reject the old established curriculum to focus upon a variety of subjects and activities that seem an affront to education. These teachers are especially distressed by the numbers of students coming to college from high schools today who are unable to write clearly, to spell correctly, to recognize familiar references to literature, or to exhibit the expected accomplishments of a young scholar and gentleman. Many of these complaints are valid in the sense that they are accurate statements about many college students, especially those who must be admitted to college as "graduates" of high schools. Also, some capable students with high intelligence can and do loaf through high school, never being challenged or expected to do high-quality academic work because they are in a school with many who cannot do more than get by academi-

cally. Foreign observers almost unanimously speak of the immaturity of our high-school students and say that they lag as much as two years behind the English or Continental students (who, it should be remembered, are a much smaller and usually a highly selected group of students).

These criticisms often express or imply a contempt for the high schools struggling to provide some kind of program for the adolescents who are not going to college, could never get into college, and do not want to go there. Despite the flowery language about liberal education and the disdain for vocational education, much of our college program *is* essentially a vocational one in the sense that it prepares students for careers as scholars, as scientists, as professional practitioners. The graduate schools which a limited number of college students enter are characterized by some competent observers as "Ph. D. factories" where students are prepared to teach in colleges, in universities, and, increasingly, in high schools. All this is relevant to an understanding of secondary education today because the various statements about high schools are rarely made without some strong belief or prejudice which is not always declared and hence may mislead parents and citizens generally. Instead of rejecting what is being done in high schools, we should try to understand what they are trying to do—with emphasis on the trying, because few are able to do what they say they are doing or would like to do. Educators are often prisoners of their own professional practices, schedules, programs, status and rank arrangements. And they are confronted with an overwhelming number of students, which makes change difficult because it is hard to keep the schools running and have any time left over to plan and introduce new programs.

Young people who are too young and unskilled for paid jobs are compelled to attend school, and they must try to find their satisfactions from social living in schools. They are often lost in the crowd and have no feeling of belonging or of being recognized as individuals. They are mixed up about themselves, personally and sexually, uncertain over their usefulness in work situations. These student needs cannot be met by schools which measure by a single scale of achievement and subject young people to unnecessary failure.

THE ENLARGING HIGH-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Let us look at the different kinds of secondary schools now to be found in the United States and see what they are attempting to do today.

We must first recognize a confusion that frequently arises because of the very different educational programs that are carried on in different cities and occasionally in the same community. First, there is the familiar program of eight years of elementary school followed by four years of high school; second, there is another plan under which the elementary school is limited to six years, followed by a three-year junior high school, and a three-year senior high school; or another program may offer six years of elementary school, two years of junior high, and four years of senior high. These all embrace a twelve-year period, for children from approximately six years of age to eighteen.

As early as 1900¹ the need was recognized for some transition in education for boys and girls going from elementary school to high school. There were several reasons given for making this change. First, many students were inclined to leave school at the end of the eighth grade. A plan which provided for six years of elementary school and six of high school might, therefore, effect a carry-over to the secondary school and the retention of a larger number of pupils. Second, the break between elementary and high school occurred, under the old plan, at an age which did not seem as natural a time of transition as would be the period when most youngsters are closely approaching or have reached puberty. An education designed for these early adolescents seemed indicated.

The junior high school grew out of the observations of

¹ William T. Gruhn and Harl R. Douglass, *The Modern Junior High School*.

educators that these boys and girls needed more scope for their increasing maturity than the elementary schools could offer and yet were not ready for the highly departmentalized high school.

HIGH SCHOOLS OFFER SPECIALIZED TRAINING

One problem resulting from the enlarged enrollment in high schools, as you see from looking at the statistics, is the large number of students who are "drop-outs"—who leave school before completing secondary education. The picture of today's youth is as follows: about 80 per cent of youth of high-school age are enrolled in high school, but only about 50 per cent, or one-half of the youngsters born in one year, graduate. Thirty per cent of the "drop-outs" were reported as leaving because of financial or personal reasons, and 70 per cent said they could not get along in their subjects.¹

To understand the present educational changes, which are designed for the needs and development of youth, we should recognize that in the high school today, especially when the boys and girls are regarded as terminal students, they are given not only some of the formal subjects—English, history, and so on—but a variety of subjects that are quite new in high-school programs. These may be divided into two large groups: the vocational subjects, and the social, personal subjects. In addition a variety of courses are given in science, especially in physics, chemistry, and biology.

The provision of vocational training is a recognition that many of those who now attend high school are not planning to attend college or professional school, or do not have the competence for such higher education. Accordingly, the high schools have been increasingly offering, in addition to initial orientations to the broad fields of human knowledge, more or less specific training for work in offices, usually called commercial education, and in a variety of trade and technical fields. In specialized vocational high schools, the student may be given a number of courses designed to orient him in the scientific principles of the vocation, its background and development, and other courses that give the larger setting and significance of the vocation, including its esthetic significance.

¹ *Good Schools Don't Just Happen! A Guide to Action for Life Adjustment Education.* Science Research Associates, 228 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago 4, Illinois, 1950.

In such a large metropolitan center as New York the following different kinds of high schools are in operation (in addition to the usual academic program): ¹

Automotive:	A specialized high school designed to develop skilled workers in the automotive field.
Homemaking:	A specialized high school designed to train girls and women in nursing and home-making.
Technical:	A polytechnic high school which prepares competent students who have scientific and technical interests for direct entrance into industry as technicians or for admission to engineering colleges.
Commercial:	A specialized high school designed to train students for entrance into the commercial occupations.
Fashion and Needle Trades:	A specialized high school which seeks to prepare young people for entrance into the needle trades.
Food Trades:	A vocational high school designed to train young people in the basic skills and tools of the food industry.
Music and Arts:	A specialized secondary school for children who are talented in music and art.
Machine and Metal Trades:	A specialized high school that offers training and experience in the machine and metal trades.
Aviation:	A specialized high school devoted to the training of aviation mechanics.
Maritime:	New York City's maritime high school.
Printing:	A specialized school that provides extension courses for journeymen and apprentices, and all-day pre-employment courses for youths intending to enter the trade.
Textile:	A specialized, monoteknical high school that offers a wide range of courses in the textile world.
Science:	A school for young people with superior academic competence who seek enriched opportunities in mathematics and science.
Industrial Arts:	A specialized high school designed to prepare talented young men and women for entrance into art occupations.
Fine and Household Arts:	A specialized high school in which girls receive special training in the fine and household arts.

¹ Board of Education of the City of New York, *Specialized High Schools in New York City*.

It is also interesting to note here that, because of the growing need for trained personnel, business and industrial organizations have been increasingly active in helping to establish and carry on these schools of specialized training; some of the labor organizations have likewise helped to set up these programs. In general these specialized high schools are to be found in communities where industries need personnel with this training, and consequently these technical high schools differ from community to community.

In this development of specialized secondary school training we are seeing the emergence, in a new form, of an old pattern that was followed for many generations, namely, the apprentice system. In the old days, before the Industrial Revolution, young boys were apprenticed to master craftsmen and learned the skills and techniques of the trade by actually working in the shop.

The rise of the factory system, and of relatively simple machinery, made this prolonged apprenticeship no longer necessary or desirable; but today, as industry becomes more and more complicated and dependent upon workers who have some understanding of the basic processes involved in the necessary operations, we are seeing the development of a modern equivalent of the old apprenticeship system in these technical high schools, some of which send their students into factories for experience.

At the same time there seems to be—although here no one can speak with too much certainty—a significant shift in the outlook and aspirations of youth. Apparently adolescents are inclined to think that the pursuit of success through the long-recognized professions or in business or commercial activities may not offer as much in the way of security, status, or possibilities for a well-rounded life as those careers once provided. Accordingly, there seems to be a growing interest on the part of youth in gaining the necessary understanding and skills for industrial technical jobs, where they can earn a living and make a place for themselves in our technically oriented society.

There is a concrete human problem that may arise in any family today where an adolescent, usually a boy, may provoke considerable family conflict and greatly disturb his parents by announcing that he wants to prepare for work in one of these technical areas rather than enter a business career or go to college. As we must point out again and again, boys and girls of today are increasingly making choices, and are expected to make choices, expressive of

their own personal hopes and aspirations. It is therefore very important for parents to be clear as to what they are doing when they oppose these self-selected programs and try to guide or direct or compel their children to follow a plan that may seem highly desirable to the parent, but not to the boy or girl.

As parents, we cannot be too careful to recognize how often we try to live our lives in and through our children, to satisfy our frustrated hopes and ambitions by using our children as instruments for what we once longed for and still believe to be important. The authorities in our high schools and colleges, especially those concerned with the guidance of youth, repeatedly see how parental desire and ambition often create some of the most bitter conflicts in children who find themselves driven into various educational programs and jobs in which they can find no satisfaction, and which they often cannot do successfully. This is one reason for the many self-defeats in young people today.

CHANGING CURRICULUM

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

In the junior-high-school years adolescents have time to look at areas where they may have problems—in numbers, reading, writing, language—and to get special help in remedying those problem areas. Dramatics, art, science are also important for these boys and girls as a way of gaining self-confidence or increasing skills and creating satisfactions with others.

Many teachers (and parents), objecting to changes in high schools, such as discussion groups among boys and girls who work with their own ideas, often voice various arguments against them. How can you, they ask, get a seventeen-year-old to use his own ideas when he has never before done so? How can you start him thinking productively when he resents and even resists thinking except to answer questions on a test? All during his school life he has been doing "test thinking," that is, aiming at a mark and using cut-and-dried answers from adults. How can you convince him that he *has to work with his problems in every area of living* in order to enjoy and profit from living at home and working at a job?

A program used with young children in many kindergartens and first grades is called a reading-readiness program. It

offers a series of experiences, trips, discussions with young children, that provides *a common background and stimulation and reason* for their learning to read. The junior-high-school program should provide a *thinking-readiness* program—that is, a series of the same sort, using art materials, trips into the community, discussions, as a background of experiences for the years ahead—as a *thinking* generator! This program aims at giving boys and girls competence in finding and trusting their capacity to think and to feel that their thinking is important at the time when they are becoming capable of formulating concepts and using abstractions. From there, they can go on to later adolescence using an approach to work that comes out of seeing problems as a stimulant to thinking and acting. A youth can enjoy digging out material that will illustrate what he means. By that time he can relate a new experience to others he has had, and can talk about them as concrete evidence of why he thinks this way or that. He sees where he needs to refine a large generalization in order to apply it to a specific situation. This means alterations in language, written or spoken, so as to say what he means and to get the idea across to others. It also means listening to and thinking about other people's ideas.

THE HOME-ROOM TEACHER

One problem that was recognized with the development of the junior high school still concerns educators: the student's transition from an elementary school where he spent the larger portion of his day with one teacher—except for the few specialists such as music teacher, gym instructor, science, art, or shopwork specialist—to the high school with its many departments and classes. There the boy or girl goes from one teacher to another, and he, too, is “departmentalized”—that is, he has a number of teachers but no one teacher knows him well; each teacher evaluates his progress in one particular subject; every teacher, by his or her specialized training, is impelled to see that “his” subject—mathematics or English or history—is fully appreciated and adequately studied. So the student is rated, exhorted, berated, lauded for his skill or lack of skill in one area, with little knowledge of what he is doing in other subjects, or of what subject he dislikes, or even what started and increased that distaste.

If you know twelve- or thirteen-year-olds, you realize their need for a grown-up with whom to relate themselves and

the amount of positive effort they will extend if someone shows an interest in them. You can see how self-critical they are becoming about their own work, and how quickly they will drop or assume a sour-grapes attitude toward what they feel they cannot do. They are in a transition phase; previously they were guided by and tried to live up to what adults expected. Now they begin to be unsure of their ability, needing more than ever a friendly adult to recognize and encourage them. Consequently, the impersonality of many teachers, many classrooms, of not knowing where you stand with any one of them, can present an extremely confusing picture. The young adolescent still wants to please the adult, while at the same time he wants to cover up anything which seems childish or immature, to conceal his feelings and inadequacies.

Therefore the home-room teacher, who is guide and friend of the young person, is important in the new curriculum. This teacher helps tie together and integrate the various activities of each youngster, the records and reports about his progress; he is aware, through reports and test materials, through observation and talk with the pupil, of what each pupil's difficulties are, socially and intellectually. He uses test material to help the student to help himself. Such a teacher shows the adolescent how the test is a tool—that is, he helps him to use it to analyze his problems and discover his capacities. Too often the adolescent is tested so that the school can report to parents, not so that he can discover something about himself *for himself*. Parents need to understand this so that they can help their adolescents develop attitudes about tests and schoolwork which will enable boys and girls to feel that schoolwork is something to be explored, that you have to look at what you can do and grapple with problems before you can solve them. This feeling of exploring is important in the early high-school days because it gives young people a sense of getting their teeth into problems rather than dodging them.

No young adolescent we know is unwilling to talk about his problems, unless he is jittery about making a grade for his parents or for the adults in school. The jittery feeling is generated by not knowing where he is going to make the next mistake or why he is failing. It comes out of a general attitude that school results or test measurements are telltale signs of what one can do—or mostly of what one cannot do.

Adolescents, to protect themselves, may then develop a variety of excuses for not working. In a good school the

home-room teacher uses tests for clearing up such confusion and helping the learner to feel he can control his own work production. In conferences the home-room teacher may help parents to see the youngster's strengths and capacities, perhaps asking for some cooperation in a consistent attitude about his difficulties. This teacher is, in other words, also a *guidance* person, someone well trained and thoroughly acquainted with the difficulties of youngsters, one who can work not only with boys and girls but also with other teachers. Such a skilled person will (or should) know of testing procedures of various sorts, and will be particularly careful in using different testing procedures for every child. He will be a resource for the teaching staff and for parents, will keep in touch with the school program and the community and their relation to the youngster. This kind of helpful guidance is essential in schools today, as we point out in detail later.

The teacher, however, in his guidance capacity, is not a specialist or a trained psychologist. He is not, and shouldn't be, an amateur psychiatrist. When we speak of his guidance we do not mean a practice of asking for the youngster's innermost confidences; such a procedure might be exceedingly harmful indeed, for the confidences might be unwittingly used in a damaging way by someone who did not realize their import to the child or to his parents. We mean, rather, the guidance that comes from day-to-day rapport with a friendly, warm adult who is able to talk with an entire group or a single child about their school problems, hobbies, a project, a job, who asks for comments and suggestions for a program or social affair, who tries to help steer youngsters to avenues where they will find satisfaction if they seem out of things, withdrawn, unpopular, apathetic.

In the junior-high-school years the home-room teacher should be the resource for students who want to find study materials for their work or who want to talk about difficulties they meet in their various studies.

The home-room teacher, therefore, is acquainted with the requirements of a pupil's courses, with what is going on in the art, recreation, lunch, and other rooms as well as in the science class. Over and above taking the youngster's word for what he can do, he needs to see him in action so that he knows how the child affects other boys and girls and how they affect him.

This idea of a home-room teacher arose out of the needs of junior-high-school students, but in forward-looking schools

it is being extended into the senior high school. There is a special need for continued guidance in senior high schools, and home-room teachers are often able to spot the discontented student, the one who does not participate in extracurricular hobbies or social activities. The home-room teacher can often prevent a potential "drop-out" by giving him assistance in finding a place in the school.

This all sounds very simple—almost an obvious "new" idea in the curriculum. Yet, as educators have pointed out, the high school with its larger numbers of pupils has tended to become mechanical and impersonal. Young children have many people close to them who understand their problems. But we find that with adolescents parents seldom know what the school asks of their boy or girl; teachers have little contact with the home, and there is almost no one who is completely aware of all that the individual youngster must do and attain in his job—which is his schoolwork and school life.

LIFE-ADJUSTMENT EDUCATION

For a long time high schools tried to meet changing needs of students by introducing more and more separate, isolated subjects into their courses of study. In 1945 a conference of leaders in vocational education met in Washington, D. C., and recommended strongly that students of secondary-school age receive training in life adjustment. Sixty per cent of high-school youngsters, the conference stated, were not receiving an education which would fit them either for higher education or for vocational education.

Out of these meetings grew the planning and recommendations which have served as a flexible scheme for revision of secondary education. Direct, concrete experiences in the community for each youngster, the fuller realization of his individual capacities, the recognition of his need for various skills, an education which starts the boy or girl thinking and acting responsibly, ethically, with respect for work and for himself, are the general aims and objectives of the plan.

The development of new programs, such as life adjustment, developmental learning, the integrated or core curriculum, has provoked some bitter attacks by educators, especially by college teachers who believe that many educational goals—mastery of subject matter, skills and commands of materials—are sacrificed to superficial and largely non-academic concerns. These critics complain that students

from these new programs are not adequately prepared for college and have never learned to study as they should. Such critics are especially opposed to the concept of "life adjustment" as a legitimate concern for education, believing that anything not included in the long-recognized subject-matter courses is not the responsibility of the schools but belongs to the home, the church, and other agencies.

But here it is important not to be misled by labels, especially in education matters, since a school may call its program by a name—core curriculum—and that program may be excellent or woefully deficient. Moreover, we must emphasize again and again that any one high school in a school system may be ahead of or behind others for a variety of reasons, sometimes hard to define precisely. Without trying to resolve this educational controversy, we should understand what the core or integrated curriculum or its variations—developmental learning—involves, what it attempts to do for adolescents.

Guidance for every youngster is stressed: his teacher is a person who can help him evaluate his work, help him think through problems, help him see that reading, writing, literature, history, are related to his living and are the tools, not the ends, of living. In general, then, life-adjustment education is intended to provide a program whereby teachers do not consider high-school education as having a start and a finish but as a *process* of thinking and growing—through and beyond the secondary-school years. Moreover, teachers are not to feel that one year's program in one grade has "pickled" or standardized their courses. New thinking, new revisions have to come so that there will be change from time to time, with additions, replacements, and changes for continuing growth.

Thus, in some high schools there are now courses entitled "Human Relations" or "Mariage and Family Living," in which group reading and discussions use relevant materials from various sources: textbooks, pamphlets (becoming increasingly available on these topics of personal concern), novels, short stories, moving pictures (including commercial pictures that deal with human relations), observations of nursery-school and older children, and other kinds of direct experience and observations.

In many high schools now the teachers of these courses at the beginning of the term call together the parents of their students, carefully outline and explain the purpose of the course, the content and methods to be used, and invite

questions. Sometimes the teacher conducts a continuing parents' discussion group parallel with the course so that the families of these students can, if they wish, follow the same topics and thereby gain some understanding of what their sons and daughters are learning.

This method of helping adolescents can be utilized in any community where parents are prepared to cooperate with the schools. Indeed, many more schools would be providing similar courses if they were not fearful of opposition and attack from the public, especially parents. Often it happens that a boy or girl may speak at home about what has been discussed at school and arouse the parents' anxiety because the child has not reported correctly what happened or what was said in school, or has failed to explain the context in which that particular statement or topic was discussed. Parents then may jump to the wholly unwarranted conclusion that the school is teaching sex immorality or undermining religious beliefs. With such unfounded convictions, they publicly criticize and condemn the school and arouse other families to attack the teachers and principal.

These unfair attacks on the school are less likely to happen if parents are in closer contact with the school and know what the teacher is trying to do. If an occasional parent is unreasonable and unfair, his or her individual reactions will not get very far if other parents keep calm and refuse to be excited.

It is suggested that parents get together with teachers in high school and talk over what can be done not only to give students the essential academic or vocational and other training they need, but to provide more of these courses and experiences that are focused upon the adolescent's acute need for more awareness, understanding, and especially clarification of the issues, problems, choices, and decisions he must individually make today as he matures.

It has been found that in the less formal academic activities, such as the arts, dramatics, dance, music, there are many opportunities for adolescents to discover themselves and to release their feelings in positive, constructive ways. Spontaneous dramatizations, role-playing, reading and discussing short stories and novels that present human situations are all being used in school today. But parents should be more aware of their value and their effectiveness so that they will not be misled by the frequent attacks on the schools for "fads and frills," for neglecting the academic subjects, for so-called soft pedagogy.

THE EMPHASIS UPON PROBLEM-SOLVING

Along with the home room and home-room teacher has come another development in teaching. Some schools call it the integrated or "core" curriculum. In other schools it is called "common learnings," "unified studies," "general education," "basic living unit," or the "social living" course. The same problems have provoked these new programs that the home-room program and the home-room teacher have tried to meet: the difficulties of departmentalized teaching, the split of studies into subject-matter areas which are unrelated, and the need to integrate courses, books, rooms isolated from one another.

Education which is going to provide a boy or girl with the tools and the inclination for *continued* learning should teach him the best ways of solving *his* problems. The aim of these newer programs is, therefore, toward problem-solving and *experience* in life situations which youngsters meet as citizens, as community members, as growing boys and girls soon to become adults. Basic living in a unit course means using accumulated knowledge as experience, too—the thinking evolved by others to solve comparable problems.

These programs offer a unit in which several subjects formerly taught separately are combined. For example, where once English, social studies (history, geography, economics), and science were taught as separate courses, they are combined in one unit planned as a broad area of learning. (The combination may include mathematics rather than science.) The over-all unit is usually concerned with health, problems of government, sanitation, family living, present-day world affairs, vocational interests of boys and girls, art as applied to living at home or to one's own appearance, skill related to communication and language, to a future job, to personal satisfaction, the development of music for enjoyment, and so on.

For such a unit of studies the school allots a large block of time, the equivalent of two or more class periods (a class period is now usually fifty minutes), and expects that ten or more hours per week will be devoted to the unit course.

Parents, and especially many educators, assert that such a program becomes a diluted education: students never master any one subject or learn thoroughly what has been considered essential in secondary education. The advocates of the program point out that academic achievement often leaves

the student wholly unprepared to live in our contemporary world, with little or no readiness to face the tasks of adult living. Moreover, the student of separate courses rarely sees any relation among the several subjects he takes.

These combinations of academic units of study are intended to help young people realize the difficulties our modern mechanized world presents, the many questions and choices it raises for a young man or woman, the necessity for recognizing that each individual has the right and the capacities within him to make sound choices and to be an effective member of society.

THE LIBRARY

The library has always been potentially an excellent resource in schools; when students had an assigned reading list, an assigned text, the librarian's job was chiefly to keep those books available and in order. Today there is an emphasis (in good schools) on the pupil's learning to use a library, learning to find books and pamphlets and magazines related to a topic on which he is working. So, instead of being directed to choose this book on that shelf, students are taught to command a library, just as you learn the command of language. The librarian shows students how to consult a card catalog, the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*, the *Cumulative Index* of books, to write to various governmental agencies, or even to industries, for illustrative materials on various topics. He tells students what museums have to offer in the way of illustrations or specialized materials; he encourages students to be critical of books and literature (no one needs this guidance more than the student who has a theme to write and must wade through masses of books to find what he wants).

And so the librarian has become a key person who actively participates, in some schools, in the teachers' meetings, and aids teachers in their work, who really helps youngsters discover that knowledge lies in thinking, searching, asking questions.

CREATIVE WRITING

Learning to write is almost as hard in the high-school years as was reading in the first grade. Therefore, along with the writing connected with projects and reports, many good schools include *creative writing* in the program—that is, writ-

ing poetry or stories which draw upon boys' and girls' imagination, thoughts, dreams. Here again the teacher works primarily to get adolescents to say something that comes out of them and their feelings and experiences. This is almost like the process of putting a picture on paper. It is a slow shaping into words of the way a boy or girl sees life; he begins to use words that give the shading and color he wants. Here, too, teachers are concerned first with getting these pictures down and do not concentrate on rules of grammar or the spelling of each word. Grammar provides form; that is why it was developed, and that is why we use it, *but purpose and goals in writing come first.*

In beginning to write, the adolescent has to get to know himself. The written word or phrase looks back at him as his own creation and his own reflection. Most often he does not like it: he does not feel that what he has written is really himself speaking; it seems poor in contrast with what he can say or think. In other words (like the school beginner, learning to read), he has to go backward to simple language and ideas in order to learn how to express more complicated ideas. Somewhere, either at home or in school, the boy or girl has to be helped to feel that this going backward is also going forward. Very often, in writing what he thinks and feels, the adolescent begins to reconsider and restate confusions or impressions that extend way back to childhood experiences. Writing becomes a way of fashioning a new image of himself, a way of digesting and using past experiences to know himself better.

ART

In school programs or units such as we have described, the active participation of boys and girls in getting firsthand information in books, pictures, magazines, and in putting this material together, leads almost surely to the use of art or art materials. Making a map, making scenery for a play, decorating costumes, illustrating a report, going to museums to see actual costumes or reproductions, tools, paintings, crafts of earlier days—all are ways in which boys and girls use and apply art in their schoolwork.

Old courses in art in high schools were called "Art appreciation." Boys and girls analyzed great works of art according to what the teacher and books said about them. This

kind of analysis is fine—if the student has some background in using paints or clay himself. But often the gulf between Egyptian or Greek art and a boy or girl was a chasm of boredom, because of the lack of background knowledge of the relation of art to the people who created it, the way they lived, the ideas they believed in. Art seemed to be something kept in a museum, something you could never fully understand, and therefore you had very little basis on which to evaluate art in your own life.

The newer kind of art program brings art materials into the classroom. Young people experiment with paints and clay to produce art works of their own. First they begin to understand that colors, like words, can be used to express a mood or a feeling. They realize that just the feel of creating, on paper, on canvas, or in a piece of clay, has a special value: it is satisfying to find that out of the jar of paint or a lump of clay you can create shape and form. This feeling is one of the most important discoveries in artistic work: the boy or girl realizes that art comes out of each individual's feelings about himself and the world he lives in.

Second, as the adolescent continues to experiment with materials he realizes that he has to find ways of communicating what he wants to say. Again, this means a better, deeper understanding of what artists of the past and present have done with color, shading, line, form. He begins to look more carefully at objects and people in order to make his production a true picture of what he sees and what he wants to say.

Third, the student as an artist begins to appreciate the many forms that art takes in human living: the masks of a primitive people, the pottery of an Indian tribe, the tapestries of the Middle Ages, or the statues of classical Greece. All grew out of beliefs and values held by specific groups of people at the time of their creation. Some art works (such as masks or vases) were made to serve specific functions in living or in ceremonies. Art is also a statement of religious aspiration and beliefs.

In art work, probably more than in any other field, students can see the vast differences between the kinds of art and can understand art as different kinds of statements by different individuals. Art works cannot be compared one to another; each is valuable and beautiful *for what it says*. To get this idea is to grasp a profound sense of the importance of each individual's ideas and the importance of *a person's integrity and self-trust* in what he says or does.

MUSIC

Perhaps the rediscovery of folk songs as part of our heritage has contributed a new leaven and a new dimension to our awareness of the varieties of musical experiences. At any rate, many more groups of youngsters and adults seem to know and sing the folk songs which have been collected in books and on records. On the whole, there seems to be a smaller division today between those who understand and love good music and those who say they "don't like" music.

The trend within and without school seems to be twofold. Parents and students are learning to become participators as well as enlightened listeners; school bands, orchestras, a wider variety of songs, including the "round," the folk song, the chant, songs of other nations, are more and more a part of musical education in the schools and not just in after-school sessions. A second trend is the use and enjoyment of music in *every* field by *every* student. Today, for example, when a school seeks a music teacher it stresses first of all his ability to fit his teaching to dramatics, to literature, to the social studies, and to the art program. Then the personality of the teacher comes into account. Does he like young people? Does he know what their interests in music are, and is he willing to draw on those interests and relate them to his teaching? Can he plan a music program which includes the adolescent who cannot carry a tune as well as the gifted youth?

In the elementary schools today good music programs involve teaching children to play simple instruments, even if those children are not to become gifted performers. The accent, again, is on enjoying music—not necessarily learning it for demonstration purposes. In high schools, too, a good teacher will use this desire to make music positively, so that even the so-called "unmusical" adolescent can become familiar with rhythm, combinations of tonal qualities in instrumental music, use of one or another instrument, as well as melody to accent rhythm or set a mood.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

Space and time for physical activity are musts for adolescent boys and girls. A session every day in vigorous sports or games or gym activities should be part of every school program. Physical and psychological tensions reach a new

high in adolescence, and there is release in whole-body exercise that makes work easier.

Each boy and girl, then, needs this kind of physical outlet, every educator and almost every parent would agree. Yet the physical-training program often becomes the most painful part of school for a sizable number of adolescents. When young people are graded on muscular power or calisthenic skill alone, there is a strong chance of embarrassment and shame among the less competent adolescents.

The physical instructor who says that boys and girls gain a feeling of self-mastery when they learn to use their bodies well is quite right. However, the way to gain self-respect as well as good use of one's body does not lie in shame. The athlete who is skillful enjoys his sport and his skill fully; he is not using athletics to punish his body, certainly.

The boy or girl who cannot do well in sports or gymnastics may literally punish himself and feel more tense in the process of trying to meet the instructor's requirements. Often physical educators give the adolescent the feeling that he cannot accept his or her own body unless it is highly developed and trained physically. This attitude may be very damaging to the young adolescent girl who is trying to accept her own developing female body, or to the young male who is already very worried by his lack of the preferred male body build.

We know, if only from our own experiences, that physically all young people do not have the same capacities. We also realize that such varying abilities do not rule out at least one avenue where we can use whatever skills we possess to enjoy physical activity.

Moreover, those young people who are skillful at a sport, or at dancing, or at running or swimming, may like to test and demonstrate their skills in competitive sport. Other adolescents do not like the competition of highly organized sports and much prefer the activity where they can perform to the best of their abilities without drawing dishonor to their teams or calling attention to themselves. We cannot, therefore, make the broad statement that competitive sports are good or bad. They are good for some and devastating for others, just as the spelling bee may be exciting and fascinating for one child and an agony for another.

Schools are beginning to take such differences into account and to offer a much wider diversity of physical activities than formerly. Swimming, folk dancing, interpretive dancing, hockey, volley ball, archery, and informal games are being offered in physical-education courses. Also, educators recom-

ment interschool games between sports teams of boys and girls. However, though long lists of varied activities may look very inspiring to the reader, sometimes even the best program is offset, in reality, by the instructor's attitude to his students. Perhaps more than in any other area, the teacher in physical education is inclined to feel that the adolescent who doesn't exhibit skill is not making an effort and so rates him low.

Certainly there is no time when differences in growth and maturation are more pronounced than in the adolescent period, but no period at which teachers try harder to make people all alike! Achieving a skill of any kind is extremely valuable for the adolescent. It proves to him that he can go ahead and that he is not incompetent. Moreover, being in need of social recognition, he wants recognition for having achieved such skill. It does him little good to feel he's in a "remedial" class in athletics, where no one expects him to show any gains and he's just killing time to meet school requirements. He could and should be helped, as an individual, to face his own physical difficulties and to be able to assess gains in ability. He needs to understand unevennesses in growth, *his* pattern of growth, and to see that there are many, many avenues for developing skills which are not labeled "calisthenics."

Physical educators have immense opportunity in their classes to act as guidance persons for youth, to check fully on health and growth records, on the over-all attitudes of each adolescent, and to ascertain what is best for his needs. Many a fast-growing boy is stoop-shouldered, long-limbed and lethargic, partly from physical factors and partly from psychological attitudes about his growth. He may be ashamed of his lack of muscle, and if an instructor insists that this is the boy's own fault, a general unmanliness, the growing adolescent won't be inclined to feel any better about using his body or achieving a skill.

In some schools physical-education teachers are trying to discover the aspirations of the boy or girl and help their achievement as far as possible. Thus, the desire of girls to be attractive or charming is being channeled into better habits of diet, sleep, appropriate exercises.

The vicious circle of attitudes which arise out of failures or shame in one area can be all-pervasive unless friendly teachers learn from their records and observations what an adolescent can do and help him do it. This means honest evaluation of what he can do—not shaming, more comparison, and

force. Physical education is one of those courses where young people can be helped by wise teachers to take new inventory of their bodies and their growth, to develop and enjoy skillful activity, and thereby to initiate new attitudes which, in turn, will affect other avenues of growth.

SCHOOL CAMPING

One of the best all-around living experiences for young people is the school camping program developed in several states. In such a program boys and girls live and work together, planning, cooking, and sharing meals, participating in chores, discussing informally tasks to be done, working on the building of new cabins, repairing machines, learning the geological history of a region in its trees, its rocks, its lakes, its wild flowers. They actively live in and with a community.

One of the best examples of a broad school camping program is that developed in the Michigan public schools. Starting in 1940 with three experimental campsites made available to the schools by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the State Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Conservation instituted and enlarged a system of camping throughout the school year.

For the boys and girls who go to the school camp for a week or more the advantages have been twofold. The youngsters work and enjoy working with one another and with adults; in terms of sound democratic human relations the plan has taught lessons in hygiene, nutrition, conservation, and responsibility which a textbook course could never teach. And teachers learn: they begin to see the pupil-in-the-round—a youngster with capabilities they hadn't recognized before; they learn to evaluate children more keenly and their work more carefully. Through working with special teachers and camp counselors, through talks with parents, planning for the camp experience, teachers grow in building pupil resources and techniques which can be used in school later on. The camp, then, is a situation where everyone feels freer to learn and grow. The camping experiment with the older boys who had left school or who were dissatisfied with school is a project in living and working which endeavors to teach them usable skills in an all-day environment.

Today the camping program needs developing in every state so that boys and girls can get out of the classroom into real work situations, use their bodies, let out tensions, and

gain the sense of competence which they lose when there are no challenging jobs for them in their communities. These camps provide a purpose in working and in learning that is immediate and challenging. It is a satisfying learning, physically; it offers the sense of a world of one's own which the adolescent needs, and which he often seeks in a gang or a cellar club.

Such camping groups offer one of the most promising leads in education today. They are one possible answer to the destructive youth gangs who make a place for themselves and get attention, but at the expense of other citizens. The camping idea is education in its best sense: the camp is a community, the community has a purpose, and the purpose is directed to self-satisfaction as well as to helping improve our land and natural resources. The success of the Michigan Camping Program demonstrates that youth wants desperately a spot to work in where he is on his own, but planning constructively.

HELPING THE ADOLESCENT IN HIGH SCHOOL

Few adolescents go through high school without some difficulties, such as blocks and failures in meeting school requirements, or refusal to work in accordance with their actual capacities, or maybe personal problems of more or less seriousness. While parents are of vital significance in the life of the adolescent, as we have tried to show, they may not be able to provide the kind of help the adolescent may urgently need. The teen-age boy and girl are now facing situations, meeting demands and expectations, which are their problems, not the parents'. They want the continual backing of their parents; they need, as never before, to feel that their parents believe in them, trust them, and love them. But they cannot, without handicapping their own development and struggle to become adults, lean on their parents or expect them to provide ready-made answers to their own outside-home problems.

In these years, as we have repeatedly stated, adolescents should turn to the outside world, look to others, especially other adults, for much of the guidance and specific help they need in order to cope with their schoolwork, their social life, and their own personal worries and deep concerns. The wise, understanding parent, therefore, will recognize this, but be ready to help wherever possible.

HOMEWORK

"How can we possibly get our boy [or girl] to do his homework without nagging him—and yet help him to realize what he *can* do?" is the query of so many parents who watch their adolescents putting off lessons each night, fussing and fumbling with pages until almost bedtime. No one knows why it

is that, whether high-school student, college man or woman, or professional worker, all of us tend to put off tasks, especially mental tasks, until the last possible moment. Neither our adult lives nor those of our youngsters seem to be so constructed as to give recognition and reward for hours spent by ourselves mulling over a theme or a problem in mathematics.

Homework is, first of all, the boy's or girl's *own work*—not the parents'. We need, then, to give young people a feeling for the importance of their work and the adults with whom they work. In the junior-high and the high-school years, school is the young person's job. He needs, therefore, to establish a personal relationship to the adults in the school and to the work involved.

Therefore, a parent's role is essentially to show that he feels this work is important, and to indicate that rewards or awards are not so important as thinking through a problem, clarifying one's own ideas, setting goals, and, especially, establishing a way of working that is one's own way.

Very often a parent has to help the boy or girl evaluate the young person's feelings about work and authority in order to help him establish a good attitude toward working. Sometimes he is sulky toward authority, or resentful, or is frightened by it. Or the normal competition with others is complicated by parental demands so that the young person does what he does only to be better than others. One person in school whom the adolescent likes may help in clarifying, with him, his attitudes to work, and may indicate how he can tackle problems in a less fearful way.

Parents need to help adolescents trust in the people they like and in the good adults we spoke of earlier. And young people need to learn for themselves the consequences of their own work or lack of work. They need to see that mother or dad cannot do the homework, cannot mend the mistakes, but that they themselves need to make their own mistakes as well as mend them. They need to be responsible and self-governed, and that is so much easier if they are not doing it for parents, but for themselves and for others with whom they work.

High-school time is transition time, time to remake attitudes toward work, jobs, adults, that will gradually lead to critical thinking and satisfaction in jobs. School people might wisely try to evaluate work as related to the *individual* boy or girl, and see how they can help young people to set

their own standards and learn to put themselves (and not their parents) into their work.

Here, however, we might review some reasons why homework may be difficult in the adolescent years.

In adolescence especially the expectation and accent of sociability, the need for social recognition and sociable duties, make work alone by oneself doubly hard. The young person has difficulty evaluating himself *by himself*, or in finding worth in his work, apart from a group venture. What he does alone, for work's sake, takes tremendous effort; it often means putting down on paper a very meager reflection of far bigger, deeper thoughts.

No matter how efficient the student, there is always a gap between what he can produce individually and his philosophic thoughts, his aspirations, his dreams for the future. It is just as hard, let's remind ourselves, for the adolescent to accept himself *as he is*, as it is for parents, who have also dreamed and planned and had fantasies about the future.

Not only that; a good deal of high-school and college work today asks for verbalization, putting into words of the youngster's own ideas and content he has got from reading or instruction. Again, this new rendition is difficult because the adolescent has not yet gained a stable point of view or orientation and so finds it hard to state what he thinks.

It is extremely important that a boy or girl know where his difficulties lie. Often you find young people who cannot accept the proposition that one particular kind of subject matter, such as mathematics or science, is especially tough for him, even though another area may be more comprehensible. Parents err when they try to tell a youngster that more effort, harder work, will result in an A+ for that particular child. The child may get the false idea that some personal defect or block, some extra laziness, is holding him back from achievement.

Conversely, parents and he himself may not give sufficient credit to the areas where he is competent and does well. There is strong evidence,¹ from educators also, which points to the fact that many youngsters are "slow starters"; that is, they have extreme difficulty in writing or reading comprehension during the high-school years and then blossom into new brilliance in the college period. For a recent study of the psychology of adolescent girls² there are indications that,

¹ J. Roswell Gallagher, *Understanding Your Son's Adolescence*.

² Lawrence K. Frank et al., *Personality Development in Adolescent Girls*.

with the realization of new horizons, new body development, new demands, the youngster cannot express himself as easily or work as objectively as he did in the elementary years. All of which, of course, makes parental pressure for achievement or homework baffling to the boy or girl and doubles his guilt or anxiety about schoolwork.

One point which parents should realize, then, is that the adolescent may need to talk about his successes as well as the difficult spots in his work. Difficulties, let us add, do not mean failures. A just-passing grade for one girl or boy may represent as much effort as an A for another student. There are many nuances of intelligence which are not shown in the grade on a report card, nor in the I. Q. score. This is especially true in the secondary-school years, when emotional difficulties or poor reading ability or slow growth may result in an over-all resistance to work. Some children get completely panicky or extremely nervous when they are asked to perform on an oral or written exam. The test situation, in itself, may stand for a trial, a probing, which the person at this vulnerable period cannot take. He or she may be far too unsure of his rating in his own eyes to stand up for inspection by adult eyes.

Talking about one curriculum problem, one subject, then, in terms of what it means to the youngster, where he fails to comprehend the discussions or readings, may be more relaxing—and at the same time stimulating for him—than packing him off to his room to work. Themes or compositions assigned for English or social-study classes are many times the bugaboo of adolescents. Perhaps the young person needs to get his thoughts in order. Perhaps he has no faith in the fact that a simple, forthright sentence which says what he wants to say is as good as, or better than, the elaborately phrased statement. Maybe he needs to get clear on what his conclusions are, where he holds some convictions, how to apply them in any of the minutiae of everyday living.

It is not only the adolescent who feels hesitant about putting his thoughts down on paper. His ideas, he may feel, are too unworthy, too childlike. You can show him or tell him that an idea stated so as to be convincing—no matter what the idea—has value and worth. Try a game in the family of each one's stating his thesis about decorating a room, about cats or dogs, about weather, the spring, movies, babies, etc. Thinking very simply and logically in one area can always be a creative jump to another field of endeavor. Frequently,

though, young people (and always older people) speak or write high-flown thoughts without making their logic apparent. We, too, skip the small details and concentrate on the bigger, less personal themes.

Some children or adolescents work best alone; many do not. Concentration by himself for one child may mean tying himself tighter and tighter in knots, getting into a stew about one problem instead of going ahead on other aspects of homework. A good teacher can help a youngster locate his difficulties, can help him to success in various fields, can accent his positive effort and his capacities. But often, like the young child, the adolescent doesn't want to disclose what he doesn't understand, doesn't want to ask questions for fear he'll be considered stupid. Sometimes he thinks he understands but is merely groping; or, in the classroom, he may not want to declare ignorance before the other boys and girls. His cover-up device of a know-it-all front may block a teacher's attempts to be friendly and helpful.

The cardinal rule about schoolwork and homework is this: parents must not deprecate extracurricular activities or success. The youngster who shines in a school play, who can construct scenery, who is good with younger children in the school, who is a careful organizer of social groups or an artistic (though seemingly dreamy) class member, may, in the later high-school years, because of such success show initiative and great effort in other areas. No one can work who feels constantly inept, inadequate, and is told that he is. We know how damaging this is in adult life; we learn that criticism should be constructive rather than what we call "frank." Adolescents *do not know* what they can do or how well they can do it, and belittling remarks such as, "You wouldn't have to be urged if you were asked to draw [or make up rhymes, or go to a party]," do not help. Of course he wouldn't have to be urged, and that's as it should be! You may have to press and urge a little for homework, but you do it with the full understanding that it *is* work—difficult, maybe, and probably hazy in spots.

The adolescent, especially in the early and middle years of this period, is not always a self-starter and may need a boost to start working, an offer of help to clarify what is difficult—even if that obstacle is not involved in the specific homework assignment. There is often an attitude of resistance carried over from other areas of work which makes the youngster balk against settling down to an assignment. Talk about it. Let him fume and fuss, if necessary; let him air his problem so

that he can be told he can manage the difficulty in various ways.

If homework is an endless grind for your youngster, if, despite the fact that he seems to have good intelligence, he is depressed about schoolwork, why not see the teacher and find out where the trouble lies? Maybe his energies are dissipated in school because he doesn't fit into the after-school social events, because some of his habits or mannerisms make him disliked. Perhaps he is not a poor learner but a slow thinker. Maybe you've sent him to a high school where competition for marks and achievement are more than he can stand. It is possible that, in the one subject where he falls lowest, he has the poorest teacher; conversely, that might be the reason for his falling behind. Some schools press hard for academic achievements; others may put on pressure, but at the same time teachers are helpful, understanding people; still other schools may have high standards but use stimulating methods and content for the students.

A teacher may not have a clear idea of your child's ability. If he talks fluently, he may give the impression of greater understanding than he possesses in a particular subject; or if he is docile in school, eager to please, the child himself may be deeply troubled when he can't understand, can't get a good grade.

Children of brilliant parents may have a trapped, anxious feeling if they seem to rate as only average students, especially in a field where parents excel. We've known parents who, despite their child's A on the report card, exhorted a child to do better because he wasn't "putting enough effort into his work."

Be honest with your adolescents and let them know that you are quite aware of the difficulties in academic work. Point out some of the ways of writing and thinking clearly which we suggested earlier. Sometimes a youngster may be helped by doing a math problem out loud, or reading aloud a paragraph from a book. Why not, occasionally, read the story or the book which he has been assigned and discuss it together—not every book, necessarily, and not for the purpose of doing his homework for him, but just to help him see that you are not wholly above or outside of his schoolwork and that schoolwork isn't divorced from life.

It may be hard particularly for a girl, but also for a boy, to see the whys and wherefores in strictly academic subjects, except insofar as those subjects are necessary for future

degrees or further study in college and graduate work. But a few areas of success, one or two subjects which make sense to you and your youngster, or even an occasional talk about schoolwork where you try to understand and relate subject matter, can give your child the feeling that he's not a "dumb bunny" or unintelligent, and that he will not remain at his present low ebb in work for school.

Homework needn't be a setting for each evening's dispute between parents and child. It is far wiser to help your child plan, according to his own pattern of working, methods for making the hours most profitable. Some youngsters may prefer interrupted periods of concentration, getting up occasionally to talk or have a snack; some may want to work immediately after dinner, then have a completely free time later on in the evening; some like radio with study; some need a very long time to settle down to one task. Help the youngster to plan, to find whatever pattern suits him and gets him through the homework most efficiently.

Also you must remember that if you are interested in the young person's other-than-school activities, if you talk to him and listen, he'll respect you and meet you halfway on requests for working. Are you interested in school affairs? Do you like to hear about the various boys and girls in the group? Do you talk about your own work positively? Do you try to lick difficulties instead of just groaning about them or avoiding them? Do you pay attention to and discuss new ideas in the newspaper, in books and magazines? Are you interested in this or that new scientific device or idea? Can you get enthusiastic and discuss the pros and cons of some political philosophy? In other words, do you think, too; do you discuss ideas together? Are they so much book-work, or are they alive and real?

Let's recognize the fact that the secondary-school years are probably the toughest years of school life. In college-preparatory courses there is an enormous amount of new material: languages, physics, chemistry, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, learning to write properly styled research papers, government, history, and so on. Those years are packed with new content and new ideas, new backgrounds for facts already learned. It is only fair to let youngsters know that what seems difficult *is* difficult, what seems like a load *is* a load, and that marks may sometimes not measure the ideas gained, the enhanced maturity, the effort which goes into learning during this period.

TESTS AND MEASUREMENTS

Once upon a time parents (and some educators) believed that if you gave a child one I. Q. test and got the results you knew just where he stood. You were able to say he was "bright," "average," or "dull." That, they felt, was that. His intelligence had been measured, and now the youngster had either to live up to his brightness or to accept the idea that he was all-around "dull."

We now know that such classification, such dependence on one test, is not only unscientific but in many cases harmful for the child and for the teacher.

We must remember that education is an ongoing process. Personality or intelligence or learning is the individual's pattern of responding to situations—not a neat little area inside of him which can be measured once for all.

Furthermore, a child's interests along one line may develop because of a specific ability, despite the fact that an intelligence score may be average or low. Or, despite a high score, a youngster may not show in his work the abilities indicated by an intelligence test. Anxieties, emotional upsets, slow or retarded physical development, lack of stimulation in the environment at home or in school, a language disability—any or all may result in poor academic school-work though the child's intelligence may be good.

From observations like these, then, grew numbers of tests other than the intelligence test. Tests on personality, aptitudes, achievement, reading comprehension, student problems, were developed to locate difficulties of students rather than to put them in categories or assign them scores. Tests were developed also as state or nationwide inventories of the effectiveness of schools in teaching, and to evaluate students for various skills.

We must think of tests not as ends or judgments but as *indicators*. If a student entering senior high school is tested on his reading and comprehension, if he falls in a low percentile for his class, and if the test is any good, then we know where he needs help: he may be a slow reader, or too fast a one to grasp adequately what is written down. His vocabulary may be poor; content may be difficult for him to comprehend; he may be frightened and anxious about reading if he's been previously pushed by parents or teachers and doesn't expect to understand or succeed—so his mind blanks out.

The wise use of a battery of tests—which means a large

number and variety of them—can help locate children's difficulties, strengths, weaknesses. In good schools tests are used also in conjunction with teachers' records of a child's attitudes to work or to adults, classroom behavior, social relationships with other children, enthusiasm for doing things, ability to finish a job, general health, disabilities, indications of restlessness, unhappiness, fatigue, worry.

Tests, in a good school, are *tools* for helping students. The teacher gives them to a child to help him know himself, and she explains the test to him in those terms. She sits down with him and helps him review his scores to see where he may have capacity or difficulty, and where he needs to work. Tests should not be given to measure the boy or girl for an adult judgment. They are starting points from which a student can take a clearer view of his difficulties and *know what he is doing*. The object is not to point out his deficiencies, not to prove he is maladjusted, but to ask "Where and why do I find difficulties? How can I do things more effectively?"

Many maladjusted boys and girls fear and hate adult measurement and do not know any way out of their difficulty through work. Guidance based on using tests should help a boy or girl plan his new course of action with confidence.

Studies¹ of tests give this positive note for parents: in the adolescent period all students grow in mental ability, but the slower boys and girls continue to grow mentally (especially in the later adolescent years) as fast as, or faster than, the bright students. And this, though merely indicated tentatively, may point to the suggestion that the so-called "dull" student can mature in comprehension of problems of life adjustment or of citizenship to a satisfactory level if he has the right sort of education. Again we see growing emphasis not on education to meet tests, but on the use of tests to guide education of individual boys and girls.

Increasingly, too, psychologists, educators, and good schools are beginning to give more consideration to the testing situation. What does it mean to the youngster? A repetition of being "on the carpet," where he has found himself many times? A situation where he "freezes up" because he feels he cannot possibly do well? By association with earlier experiences he may be frightened even before he takes the test. Also, we have to remember that on a personality questionnaire, for example, young adolescents wonder about who

¹ Federal Security Agency, *Intellectual Abilities in the Adolescent Period*.

is going to use the results, and how. They are not going to divulge anything that may be used against them, and, in all justice, they often have fairly good reasons for "clamming up."

Parents may need to talk with the teacher or guidance person about the tests and how they are used. Mothers or fathers, if they do talk about the test situation with a child, can then give him the feeling that it *is* the *boy's* or *girl's* tool—not a report to parents.

Parents also have to remember not to make the test a subject of conversation with other parents—making out of it a competitive race for parental pride. No matter what the guidance person may say to a child, a "buzz session" of parents on the subject of tests outside the school gives the young person a feeling that he *is* being measured, his faults and deficiencies *are* being talked about, and the test is everybody's view of his private business. Adolescents who get too much of the magnifying-glass technique from parents and relatives may not trust school people, believing that they are doing the same.

Wise teachers (parents, too) reassure boys and girls about the use of tests, their values, their limitations, and the reasons for which they are intended. Sometimes—most times—a person is quite blind about his own abilities, or the sources of his difficulties. The eight- or nine-year-old may love to be tested on anything—his speed in running, a problem in mental arithmetic, or even "catch" questions. But the adolescent is intensely self-critical because of lack of confidence, fear of being left out, inability to live up to his ideals, and is therefore shaky. He feels he is shyer than anyone else, or lazier than anyone else, or that his unsureness in itself is a mark of weakness. He is often reassured by being told how an objective test can give him a clearer indication of his capability. He may feel far better when he knows that the trouble is not all-over lack of intelligence but a disability in a *specific* area.

GUIDANCE AND TESTING AND THE TESTING PROGRAM

Earlier we spoke of the importance of the teacher as guide in new programs. Many times counseling is taken to mean only vocational guidance, directing a youngster into a career. While boys and girls may need this sort of help, the program of a good high school sees counseling as essentially a way of

giving youngsters more and more of the strengths each needs to meet life. Such strengths involve understanding about one's self, techniques for getting along in groups—formal or informal—ways of approaching tasks and problems, defining them, and feeling confident to meet them. Above all, counseling is intended to give the youngster a self-respect so that he doesn't constantly deprecate his difficulties or his abilities, or those of other people.

In the early high-school years this kind of orientation to tasks and people is important if we don't want youngsters to crystallize attitudes about the world, jobs, adults, authority, themselves, which will dull their satisfactions and undermine their self-confidence.

Parents are very important in a good counseling program. Despite a youngster's seeming disdain for what father and mother say, even despite good marks in school, popularity with agemates, he may, deep-down, think, "I haven't arrived. The kind of person I am is not what 'they' want me to be." We don't really recognize the devastating effect on a youngster of our high hopes, the full strength of the words which don't accept him as he is.

So in our counseling, whether the problem is physical, emotional, or academic, we have to give each adolescent the attitudes that (a) it is *he*, not we, who must realize the satisfactions in his life as well as the difficulties; (b) he is not static but developing; and (c) because he is an individual his abilities and troubles will probably be different from our own and from his neighbor's, and that trying to escape from himself, or denying his personality, or feeling that he is strange or "queer" when he has worries is not helpful or necessary.

Special areas where guidance is needed are the transition steps from elementary to junior high school, from junior high to senior high, from high school to college. "What is it all about? What do I need to do? What is expected of me? Where do these subjects lead? I wonder if I can make it." These are the silent observations of numerous boys and girls who fumble for a long time trying to grasp the meaning of the new work. At the same time, for want of well-kept cumulative records giving clues to the personalities and abilities of youngsters, the new teacher and the new school, too, may be unable to carry through effective guidance and may meet unsureness with unsureness.

A guidance testing program needs to include the widely different capacities of many boys and girls. The teacher, as a

guidance person, keeps records and observations on individual students. She uses those records with the boy or girl to help him understand himself. She sees that class experiences provide challenges or opportunities for different abilities, and she is careful that those abilities are used and recognized in projects and discussions. She does not make judgments haphazardly about a particular boy's skills, but consults records from previous teachers, and observations *from other teachers* in the school. She is in touch with parents and asks them to support the boy's or girl's effort socially, on special projects, or in subject-matter areas.

Parents may run down a teacher who is expending great time and energy trying to help a boy or girl participate in a clubroom, or alter his behavior in games and sports. If parents talk about this effort slightly, if they feel the teacher is picking on their child unnecessarily, his behavior very likely will not improve, despite the teacher's efforts.

Also parents need to alter their thinking about the guidance person. He or she is not a psychiatrist and does not pretend to psychoanalyze your child. Guidance is intended to help boys and girls do their work effectively, according to their abilities; guidance is especially concerned with the difficulties that boys or girls face socially, where they may unwittingly provoke antagonism or dislike from others, which in turn sours their attitude to work and to adults.

A guidance program is not intended to undermine parental authority. It is aimed at helping young people develop the sense of responsibility and satisfaction in their own work and self-disciplined action in social groups which (as we have noted many times) pressure from parents does not alter, and which large classes with indifferent teachers do not provide. Guidance aims for self-knowledge, development, and self-propelled action with self-respect.

The guidance person in the school may, if he or she thinks it necessary, recommend special therapeutic help for your teen-ager when he seems caught in a problem he cannot handle. Adolescent feeling may contain a mixture of present and past problems, an upsurge of old conflicts, doubts, anxieties. Disturbing episodes or experiences may produce eruptions of antagonism or depression at various times. Parents sometimes are not aware of the youth's behavior in school when he feels (and says) that the root of the trouble lies in his friends and their poor attitude to him. Very often the disturbance shows up in his work—as a sudden inability to face

tasks, a withdrawal of interest in school activities, sullenness with adults in school.

The school is wise in asking for extra help when it notes such disturbances. Talking out his conflicts with a trained person may relieve the boy or girl of fantasies or anxieties which he cannot understand. These immature feelings may continue to cloud his work and human relations in the future unless he can understand them and can see that they are not essentially reflections of a poor character or a bad person. If a boy or girl has an image of himself or herself as incompetent, unwanted, helpless, he cannot do good work, and he cannot face the demands that growing up involves. Past experiences may have a new impact at adolescence; death or desertion of a parent, sudden and unexplained separation from parents in a hospital, frightening punishments, all leave a residue of disturbed feeling in children. A therapist can help an adolescent bring the past up to date and see his disturbed feelings as normal human feelings that come when little children are threatened with loss of love or loss of parents.

This bringing up to date helps the disturbed adolescent to find satisfaction in the present and to realize that the old feelings are not binding; they relate to early experiences, and they are not judgments of a person's worth or capability.

Parents may find it painful to admit the need for therapy for their adolescents, unless they understand that disturbance of some degree arises in almost every adolescent today, that the therapist knows this and knows the problems that arise in family living today. He is there to help the boy or girl understand the source of feelings and not to blame families for what they cannot help. He is also there to help the youth alter his behavior and approach his work with confidence, and not to provide excuses for not working.

Sometimes parents feel that individual therapy is a matter of dodging work problems and coddling the boy or girl. Actually it is a way of helping the adolescent stand on his own two feet and face his problems—instead of spending his time and energies on worries that are echoes of past experience and can and should be put in their true perspective.

In most of our high schools today there is at least some kind of guidance program. It may be the function of a teacher who serves as a counselor to students in her class, or it may be highly organized service with a number of trained persons, often specialized for different kinds of guidance and testing.

Increasingly the guidance program operates as an integral part of the whole school program, not, as sometimes happened earlier, as a last resort for harassed teachers or principals seeking some way of handling a balky student or unhappy adolescent or of dealing with an irate parent. The guidance personnel try to bring together whatever is relevant and available about each student—his health record, his cumulative academic record, including elementary school, reports of his participation in various school and out-of-school activities, records of any tests, inventories, or other indications of his abilities, his personality, and his family background.

An excellent guidance program, therefore, does the following. 1. It draws upon the home-room teacher and the physical-education instructor and the teacher in every course. 2. It is part of the school curriculum. 3. It involves a program of extra-class activities for every student. 4. It aims to set up special classes for special difficulties in basic skills. 5. It offers exploratory courses for vocational guidance. 6. It accents the importance of courses or workshops for teachers which will give them orientation in understanding adolescents. 7. It uses specially trained people for counseling. 8. It is part of the administrative planning and budgeting in a school or school system. Some schools call upon the services of a psychiatrist to work with individual students in need of help. Many, many adolescents need such help to clarify perplexities which neither the high-school situation nor parents can resolve.

A good guidance program aims to help each student, from the beginning of junior high school, to find goals which are *his* goals, related to *his* capacities; to help him direct his efforts in the most effective ways, whether in social living or in academic work or in a job. Effective guidance is not intended to weaken the adolescent by giving him pre-arranged, pre-planned, pre-digested courses in living or learning. Nor does guidance seek to impose stereotyped careers on youth. Guidance persons endeavor to help each young person believe in himself, respect himself, recognize that achievement can be satisfying when he clarifies his own goals.

Interestingly, also, when parents consistently give their adolescents a chance to make choices and explore interests there is some indication that those young people are not only more successful students but also better adjusted. Dr. John

Anderson, reporting¹ on an unpublished thesis by Dr. Katherine A. Miles, quotes the following statement from her:

"Attitudes of parents appear to be crucial factors which are closely related to the social behavior of children. Parents of successful leaders show outstandingly different attitudes from the parents of other groups of children. The contrast is most marked when they are compared with parents of asocial children. In general, parents of successful children are less inclined to protect children from the normal risks of life, to shield them from the normal responsibilities of life and to prevent them from developing an adequate degree of independence which is so necessary for good mental health and normal functioning in the social group. Also, they tend to be less restrictive in the degree of control which they exercise over the child. Much more leeway is allowed the children in making decisions, using judgments and experimenting with new situations. Also the child as an individual personality is given far more respect—his rights and opinions are given consideration in the family group. In addition, parents of successful children appear to possess superior ability in evaluating forms of child behavior and characteristics of child personality which are desirable for the optimal development of the child himself." (Italics are the authors'.)

SCHOOL-WORK PROGRAMS

During the war years the appeal of well-paid jobs in industries spurred an alarming number of young persons to leave high school for full-time employment. The "drop-out" problem had concerned educators for some time, but the problem was highlighted by war, and concern grew over young people without direction or guidance in their jobs. In many schools the school-work program was developed, which would allow young people to work part time—usually four hours a day—and to attend school for an equal number of hours. According to child-labor laws and school-attendance regulations, only young people of sixteen years of age and over

¹ John E. Anderson, "Parents' Attitudes on Child Behavior: A Report of Three Studies," *Child Development*, Vol. 17, Nos. 1 and 2. March-June 1946. Quotation from "Relationship between certain factors in the home background and the quality of leadership shown by children," by Katherine A. Miles.

were included in the program, although in some special cases fifteen-year-olds were allowed to work.

The advantages of an actual work situation with school guidance were demonstrated in many cases. Young people who might have left school remained in school; furthermore, they were able to bring specific problems related to their own personal adjustment to the classroom, and to discuss those problems with competent advisers. Above all, in numerous instances, a paying job was extremely important to the young person, so that he could earn money for his personal or family needs and yet continue with school work.

The school-work program (also called the "release-from-school plan") is not a program designed to train youth on the job. The job chosen by a young person may or may not be related to his school courses. In many ways, therefore, the work program may not train the young person for more skilled employment or offer him adequate guidance in seeing that his capacities are fully used. Nor is there any guarantee that the school-work program will further his training or advancement in future jobs—unless he is trained on the job. This, of course, is possible if his employer offers him such training. But that is a function of his employer and his job—it has no relation to school training.

However, since parents' consent is necessary to release a student from school for work, conferences between parents and teachers or counselors result, sometimes, in the parents' better understanding of the young person, his needs, and his school. In turn, this parental cooperation may have a positive effect on the young person's adjustment to the school and his feelings about himself. In other words, when he is granted respect by parents, when they listen to the counselor or the teacher, those factors plus the work experience can be positive aids to his future adjustment.

While some educators and businessmen are enthusiastic about the school-work program, others still hold reservations about its effectiveness. Yet the fact remains that many young adults cannot meet the "hidden costs" of tuition in the public school: bus or train fares, costs for notebooks or other supplies, for appropriate clothing, for extra-class activities. Also schools cannot compete with the lure of well-paid jobs and the independence which wages seem to offer young people. Furthermore, young people out of school do not have the guidance for healthful living, for solving personal problems which come up on the job. Unskilled jobs may offer temporary financial security, but such work experiences may not give

young men or women a knowledge of what they can do in the future, or what kind of work they can do best.

The school-work program, therefore, is a step toward affording young people the opportunity to work and earn, to feel useful and independent, at the same time giving them continued guidance and opportunity to mature emotionally and healthfully. On the other hand, vocational training in trades, or technical training in high school, with postgraduate training in a junior college or community college (two-year college), offers them *supervised work* experience either in the high school or in industry. In most communities the high school does not have facilities for complete vocational training—that is, the machines, tools, or total industrial equipment for a trade cannot be duplicated in the school. Therefore the student may take courses in school as part of his vocational training and spend part of his time in industry or business where he learns the skills necessary for the trade he has chosen. This program has been called the *cooperative work-study or cooperative diversified educational course* program. His work is supervised and rated, since it is part of his accrediting for a diploma.

Most young people, whether enrolled in academic high schools or not, want very much to prove themselves on jobs in an earning capacity. Youth doesn't want to be parasitic. We still believe in the values of honest labor. For that reason it is extremely important for parents to understand that young people should be allowed to take summer jobs or Saturday jobs or jobs during vacation periods. Sometimes parents object strenuously when those jobs seem unimportant or unattractive. Or parents may demand that young people stay at home with the family for out-of-school weeks or months. These work experiences can be very, very gratifying and a positive stimulation for better schoolwork. For an adolescent to find that he can do a job, that he has the capacity to earn side by side with others, to have his work objectively evaluated not by a teacher or parent but by an employer of other men and women is an experience which puts living within his grasp and comprehension, and which also gives an impetus for learning in school. To *know* he is capable of being independent is an exhilarating feeling for the adolescent, who is usually fearful that he *is not* able to meet the world without parental support.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

When parents find that the local high school available to their child does not provide what is now considered good for adolescents, especially those in the junior-high-school age groups, they can do something positive to help their child. While joining in community efforts to improve the school, they can also ask other parents to cooperate in providing for their children some of the facilities, opportunities, and experience we have described as useful, if not essential, to their education.

Thus, either in homes or perhaps in the local library, parents can help to provide more of the books and the magazines and journals that students can use to look up materials, do supplementary reading, especially non-textbook reading—such as biographies and recent volumes on fields of interest. Also they can find in the various editions of reprints (paperbacks) many very useful volumes to enlarge the local library or to form a small supplementary library in the school or at home.

Dramatics, either as spontaneous role-playing, presentation of short dramatic sketches, or playreadings, are also possible and can be encouraged by parents, especially by those who are personally interested and willing to give some time to such activities. It is not essential to have a script or elaborate scenery and costumes to provide dramatic performances in which young people can act without prolonged rehearsal and express their feelings and aspirations. Puppet plays, especially with hand puppets, are also feasible.

Folk dancing and dance dramas are also good for adolescents who can plan out a dance around some dramatic theme and create their own dance patterns. Here again an interested parent can help to steer such a group, help find appropriate music and, if necessary, costumes.

A space for painting, clay modeling, and pottery, with simple equipment and materials, can often be found or easily provided, for adolescents need these experiences as much as if not more than nursery-school children, to discover themselves, to paint or model out their often inchoate ideas and feelings. While painting or modeling, and absorbed in such creative activities, a person may find refreshment and recreation of his or her ideals, or may regain emotional balance after being upset.

Every community offers innumerable possibilities for field trips to factories and stores, city departments, hospitals and

laboratories, transportation facilities, public utility plants, and for trips out in the open, to observe the land, the rocks, the soil, to observe the kinds of plants and animals that live together in an area. Often a parent can arrange for a group to visit some highly interesting and important industrial plants, or can pilot them through a series of such visits whereby they learn how their community works, earns its living, provides goods and services for the population.

Adolescents like to take responsibilities, too, and so will volunteer, if given the opportunity, as assistants in playgrounds for younger children, or as apprentice helpers to various skilled workers, and they not only learn a lot but feel they are doing something real and significant.

Discussion groups for adolescents are very desirable and can be arranged in churches, youth organizations, or at the homes of parents, wherever a group can meet and talk out whatever they are concerned with. It is important for parents or others who may arrange these meetings to realize that their value is in the free discussion by the young people. They need to speak out, to try to verbalize their ideas and feelings as best they can, *without* being censored or corrected or interfered with by adults. If they ask for help or information, it can be given upon request, but not volunteered.

Many schools still retain the eight years of elementary school and the four years of high school. Many private schools follow this schedule; schools in rural areas may also do so. We do not want parents to feel, because their children are in an eighth or ninth grade not formally designated as "junior high," that such children are losing out on new trends in education. In such cases the results for the child may be either very good or very poor.

If, however, your elementary school is handicapped by inadequate facilities, lacks a library or recreation space in or out of doors; if teachers must try to teach all the subject-matter areas without sufficient background in any one area, or without the stimulation and discussion of other faculty members; if a teacher's time is strictly bound to the classroom text and she cannot plan trips or reach the parent body by herself to get community support—then in many cases the older students in the elementary school may be bored, restless, anti-teacher, and anti-school.

Also, the entire elementary-school procedure may affect the upper grades. Poor testing and promotion procedure, stiff adherence to a grading scheme which means that children are kept back unless they complete set examinations every

year, may mean that in the upper grades there will be youngsters who are physically and psychologically too old for their groups, rebellious at belonging to "that kid school," becoming more and more antagonistic to the teacher and what she aspires to teach. A larger high school with a junior-high division might very well provide much-needed recreational space for such youngsters and let them mingle in sports, in social living, in clubs, with those who have comparable growth and interests.

The junior high school, therefore, in physical terms, may offer a wider horizon to children because the school plant itself may be larger, with facilities which serve not one small community but perhaps several communities. Youngsters grow up by imitating and identifying with the next older group, too, so that the activities of senior-high-school students, their clubs and informal groups, serve as a stimulus for interest and skill. Take a simple example: when a young child is learning to play an instrument he often gets an extra psychological boost by listening to a concert or recital given by older boys and girls of his school, or by the school band.

You probably will observe, then, that a theory of good high-school or junior-high-school education emphasizes many of the aspects of learning which newer policies and practices in elementary schools are stressing: a close correlation in teaching between the child's growth, his skill, and his life. In the same manner many, many trends and changes in education for seventh-, eighth-, and even ninth-graders are now advocated for the entire high-school teaching policy.

Again, you may point out that what we need is better articulation or integration between elementary school, high school, and college. You observe that it is difficult to have flexible programs for elementary schools if high schools set their requirements on a rigid basis which admits only academically top-rate people. Further, you may ask, "How is it possible to pay attention to one individual and his aptitudes in high school, when most of the colleges demand set entrance requirements?" You are, of course, echoing what large numbers of educators have been saying for years. The hopeful and democratic aspect of what you say is this: when a sufficient number of parents in enough communities find ways of working together to produce better high schools, then colleges will have to adjust their requirements, too. Instead of listing what is wrong with education, or loudly declaring that teachers have a "responsibility" to do thus and so, parents have to begin to consult their federal, state, and local agencies,

finding the means of putting positive effort into education instead of continually grumbling and finding fault with our youth and our educational policies.

Parents might pay attention to these facts, too:

1. Boys and girls in flexible high-school settings where there are programs designed for discussions, trips, art experiences, have *no difficulty* in getting into the best colleges.

2. The college-entrance blanks usually ask boys and girls what extracurricular activities they have engaged in, what individual interests and creative capacities they have developed as indicative of student potentialities.

3. The boy or girl with strong interests who is self-propelled, who knows what he can do, who has taken an active part in his learning may resist being squeezed into a set pattern in high school, but shine in college thinking. This is documented by almost every educator we have met.

4. If you are worried about getting your son or daughter into a "big name" college, you may be comforted to know that surveys show that some of the smaller colleges have produced many of our outstanding scientists and scholars. High-school people often have trouble convincing parents of the desirability of a good small college which may be much more desirable for a particular boy or girl.

Parents singly and in groups can do many things to make up for the deficiencies of local schools and, in doing these, will find that their children often gain a new feeling about schools, impressed by their parents' interest and active efforts.

SOCIAL LIFE IN HIGH SCHOOL

While parents and teachers often regard the adolescent's time in school as primarily, if not exclusively, concerned with study as prescribed by the school program, this is seldom true. As we have seen from our description of the life tasks and aspirations of adolescents, they are largely pre-occupied—and necessarily so—with their own personal strivings and worries, their struggles to meet the insistent requirements of growing up, and especially of their peer group. If school studies seem to be neglected or given a low priority in their busy lives, we should remember that these years have a paramount significance. From our adult viewpoint, with our concern with jobs and successful work, our awareness of the competition for advancement and the pressures for even maintaining status, we are inclined to think of these high-school years as a time of preparation for the serious business of life ahead. But the serious business of life for the adolescent is coping with life tasks now, as he meets them every day. He knows, often without being able to put it into words, that to grow up, to be an adult man or woman, it is essential to come to terms with his immediate problems, to escape from all the juvenile patterns and loyalties, the childish relationships that are holding him back. He knows in this same inarticulate way (and girls often realize this more clearly than boys) that it is now or never, because, as psychiatrists have shown, it is the "unfinished business" in our lives that so often defeats or destroys us.

If boys and girls are to go into adult life reasonably ready for a job or career, for marriage and parenthood, for responsible adult living in the many fields of activity where they must participate, they cannot continue to be preoccupied with the questions and problems of the teen-age period, to

be still dominated by strong feelings which have persisted from the past. The boy and girl must discover what it means to be masculine or feminine, what to do about sex, how to relate themselves to parents no longer as dependent children but as self-directing, responsible persons. They also must work through to some kind of philosophy of life, find some beliefs, expectations, assumptions upon which to build a life in the future. Some educators believe that a recognition of the adolescent's genuine curiosities, perplexities, and aspirations can and should be the focus of his school experience. If there are any answers to his insistent questions, any leads to the goals he seeks, the various fields of knowledge should provide them. But in the usual academic program what relevance these subjects have for living is rarely made clear to the puzzled adolescent. When the high school does attempt to provide a program oriented to some of the adolescent's concerns, and tries to integrate relevant knowledge with problems of some significance to students, it may be criticized or denounced not only by academic critics but by parents who want their children to have the familiar, long-accepted scholastic discipline. When the adolescents complain—or try to evade this program—they are accused of being lazy, scatterbrained, and even worthless or stupid.

High-school students, we may be sure, are going to spend much of their time upon what seems important to them, and this is their group living, their social and interpersonal relationships, where they will try to meet their life tasks as best they can. Parents who are worried—and often with justification—about what this social life involves, might translate their concern into some concrete definite planning instead of releasing their feelings through scolding and exhorting their sons and daughters. Like little children who are continually scolded and threatened, adolescents can become psychologically deaf to parents: they don't listen, indeed they don't hear, realizing that a parent is irritated or angry—so what!

If we look at the life of a high-school student and recognize what it may mean to the individual boy or girl, we may gain some understanding of the often acute anguish they feel over some defeat, setback, or rejection, the overwhelming embarrassment at an awkwardness or a failure to rise to an occasion. Moreover, we may be able to develop some empathy, some genuine insight, when we try to put ourselves in their place and see what these to us trivial incidents mean for them. We may laugh at teen-age behavior, feel amuse-

ment at what we call "puppy love," but we do so at our own peril, for we may alienate our son or daughter at a time when he most sorely needs our understanding and our acceptance of his unhappiness. When you are miserably unhappy—feeling guilty, perhaps, or resentful—you don't want to be told how foolish you were, how you erred in your actions. Salt on the wounds may seem to be justified, but it does not increase your love for the one who applies the salt or rubs it in. If adolescents are to learn from their mistakes, as we so often tell them they should, they should be reassured by a well-disposed adult that they are not irretrievably ruined but are still lovable persons. In the high-school life few adolescents escape without some bruises; many carry lifelong scars from these encounters.

INFORMAL SOCIAL LIFE

In a high school in Oakland, California, a "clubhouse" was set up, with the approval of teachers and parents, to be run by adolescents without adult planning, but with adult supervision. The atmosphere was informal, and boys and girls of the various secondary-school ages used it as a meeting place for games, in free hours after school as a place to sit and talk, or to have parties if they wished. Those who observed the youngsters felt that the younger adolescents who were still unsure of ways to establish social relationships with a group gained confidence by watching the older ones. Even the random teasing, roughhousing, silly chatter or behavior, had a function. It seemed to be a way of making contact which covered embarrassment, and at the same time served to establish some friendly basis of getting acquainted. After a while each youngster seemed to gain confidence as he became more secure in handling himself and in meeting others.

In the small town or city there is a definite need for such clubhouses. Boys and girls congregate around the soda fountain, on the library steps, on the street corner—just talking, shoving one another, exchanging jokes—because there is no other place to talk comfortably without limitations. Informal get-togethers such as picnics or boat rides may be found in one community group, but are not given a legitimate place in the whole community. Girls and boys will find their groups, but it does not seem fair or wise to ignore healthy

interests until adolescents have to find their own solutions, healthy or not.

This point bears repetition: young people need and want adults as guides and supervisors. They are not strong enough individually to state what is right or wise in groups. They may unwillingly acquiesce to the choices of a leader who is destructive and is working out his own personality problems by concentrating on anti-social ends.

Parents and teachers need to know what adolescent groups in the community are doing. Passive follow-the-leader tactics among young people are unwise (even when the leader is constructive); adult recognition and supervision of groups offers weak members a chance to voice opinions without fear of being shut out. One disturbed or overly sophisticated boy or girl in an unsupervised club or group can create very damaging episodes in the lives of other adolescents. Boys and girls under pressure from such mixed-up contemporaries cannot often escape or resist this unhealthy domination.

If adults would pay more attention to the extracurricular social living of adolescents, they might foster more groups which respect "good" positive individuality without damaging conformity or denying the "good" aspects of the peer group. The adolescent needs adults who can be supervisors without being dominating, who create the freedom he needs to stick up for himself and his ideas, who are creative leaders.

There are places in almost every community which could become informal centers for youth without any extra expense to parents or organizations. Also, the opportunities for the indirect guidance of boys and girls are unmatched. A home, of course, may offer some of the same possibilities, but it may also give youngsters only limited facilities, a limited time, a rather passive role in setting up a room or a space. We cannot, as parents, do everything and be everything, and the main attraction of a socially approved space for adolescents is that it belongs to them: they can build, decorate, make noise, dance, or sit still without reference to family needs or funds.

Very often parents feel that because a child is in a good school his social needs are fully met by the school program. But very often young people get caught up in a pattern (not in their own group) that puts heavy accent on popularity: who dates and who doesn't, who is sought after, who is most reckless, and so on. The incredible fact is that each one of these adolescents may have high standards and ideals for

himself, but, seeing his world as it is represented by his peers, he must, he thinks, conform.

It is extremely difficult for a parent to give his one child a sense of self-respect unless teachers and schools recognize the need for helping youth find desirable means of meeting their own social goals. These "desirable means" should not be put on an adult scale of values, but in terms of young people's observed needs for getting together and getting to know one another.

Once, in our country and in other parts of the world, it was not necessary for such values to be put into words or recognized by schools. Everyone expected that the feast, or the holiday, or the dance, or the "courting" rituals would be shared and recognized as necessary to give living and work a meaning. Today, it seems, such community sharing in the happiness and zest of living is only for adolescents and then only in a slightly less sophisticated version of what adults do! Can you blame the young for being lost? They want the *approval* of a guiding hand—not the tight reins of restriction which may say "wicked" or "kid stuff."

EXTRA-CLASS ACTIVITIES FOR SOCIAL LIVING

Today some schools and community groups are making provision for social living of boys and girls. Such groups may also be helpful to adults. In many schools time has been set aside during the school day for extra-class activities. This time is often referred to as the "activity period" and is included in the daily schedule because so many young people who travel to and from school, who have after-school jobs, or who are needed at home, would not otherwise be able to participate in the program.

The extra-class activities are usually supervised by a staff member who may be relieved from some of his teaching duties in order to carry out this supervision. Also extra-class activities have expanded beyond merely athletic programs; they include photography clubs, model-plane building, dramatics, science clubs, library clubs, dance groups, music clubs, and so on. Every young person is given an opportunity to join a group, though he is not compelled to do so.

Extra-class activities are not just social functions of a school or "busy work"; essentially they are student-planned,

student-run programs *with a purpose and a goal* set by the young people themselves. The processes of electing chairmen, leaders, committees, are democratic group processes which have to be learned and understood by youth if these young people are later to become understanding citizens of our representative government. Furthermore, the objectives and goals of a group of young people can be extraordinarily idealistic and generous when given a chance to develop. Too often adults feel that adolescents need only purely social functions to satisfy their striving for group membership—the date, the party. Yet where work goes on in informal groups, work that orients each person to a purpose outside his own immediate needs, there is apt to be a far better, more loyal tie to that person's group and to common values.

EXTRA-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

There are many youth groups, or adult and youth groups, which exist in our communities yet are not specifically part of the school's function. Very often these groups offer adolescents, especially when schools do not, an opportunity to develop skill in living and working democratically, in seeking and applying new knowledge and techniques in their homes and communities. Many such groups give young people an opportunity for social get-togethers, plus the kind of goals just mentioned—being of service as citizens and community members. The Yorkville Youth Council in New York City is one example of a group of citizens who have made a place where boys and girls can be useful and sociable. Since 1947, when the council opened its first After-School Play Center in partnership with the New York City School Board's Bureau of Community Education, groups of sixteen- and seventeen-year-old boys and girls from nearby high schools have worked with younger children on regularly weekly schedules as staff aides. They receive on-the-job supervision from a professional staff, and in addition have careful orientation and training meetings during the year. They function as nearly as possible on a professional level, and their part in the program gives them both satisfaction and a sense of achievement. The council operates six centers and brings many teen-agers as volunteers into the program annually.

BEING ALONE

The emphasis upon social life, group activities and projects is justified, as we have said, by the great importance of these things to the adolescent groping toward adult life. But we should give a highly distorted picture of adolescents if we did not at the same time point out the equal importance of facilities and opportunities for the teen-ager to explore and experiment and try out his talents in doing things by and for himself. Indeed, there is from nursery school on an often exclusive concern for group activities which sometimes seems to ignore or deny individuality. This tendency has been reinforced by an erroneous interpretation of some psychiatric observations on unhappy, disturbed children who withdraw from their agemates and brood in solitude. Some people seem to think that any desire for privacy, any interest in working their own projects alone, are indications of "introversion," as it is called, and may be the first signs of personality disorders. Accordingly, they stress group or crowd programs, as if keeping an adolescent continually in a group were a royal road to mental health.

But, as we have said again and again, adolescents are under almost continuous strain, even when they are seemingly most carefree and having a good time, because they are so unsure of themselves, so anxious about meeting the group code. They need periods of isolation, or at least absorption in their own thoughts and in their own activities, when they can regain their composure and think through their ideas or reveries. They need a variety of materials in which to discover themselves by creative work. "Creative" does not mean being wholly original and producing a masterpiece; we are creative whenever we can do something that is our own, that embodies or expresses our own individualized perceptions, feelings, ideas, and ways of handling experience. Often this is more easily done when a person is alone, free from interruption, and at liberty to work at his own pace, in his own way, on his own project or activity. Accordingly, families and schools should encourage in adolescents any interest in doing something which engages their attention and focuses their energies. This may be a hobby, so called, whether it is collecting, classifying, and arranging some kind of materials or objects; a skilled technique like building a radio; doing photography, and so on. It may be one of the arts which the individual works on alone or in

company—but in a company like a small orchestra or a chorus, where he can genuinely do his best as an individual performer and not be worried about his status as a person in a group.

Since each adolescent is an individual with his or her capacities, interests, skills, and personal concerns that may be channeled into any one of these various activities, we should recognize their diversity and fruitfulness for each boy and girl.

APPENDIX:

PRIVATE OR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

When children reach high-school age some families may wish to send them to a so-called private or independent school—that is, a school that is not part of the public school system. A decision to do this may be made for various reasons. Sometimes the accessible high schools are not as good as the parents might wish; in other cases the high school may not provide adequate college preparatory programs; and in still other cases the parents may wish to have their son or daughter benefit from the wider experience and acquaintance with other people that may be had in a school in another part of the country.

These private schools may be divided into various groups. First there are the day schools, including country day schools, to which the students go daily from their homes, often on buses. Then there are the boarding schools, where the students live away from home at the school. A few such schools take five-day boarders who go home for week ends. These boarding schools are then divided into those that are exclusively for boys, those that are exclusively for girls, and a somewhat smaller group of coeducational boarding schools. Included in the schools for boys are also various military schools.

The boarding schools of the country differ widely in their programs and equipment and facilities. Some of them are exceedingly formal and conservative, following fairly closely the pattern of the British public school and concentrating their efforts primarily upon college preparation. Others are leaders in developing new and enriched educational programs, while many others attempt to combine the customary academic program with new activities.

Then there are also the so-called “finishing schools” for girls, which provide a two- or four-year (or more) program

primarily for girls who are not going to college, although more and more of these schools now prepare girls for admission to college.

There are also a number of experimental and "progressive" private schools which provide varied programs, including college preparation. Some of these experimental schools are coeducational and operate both as day and as boarding schools.

There is a fairly large number of these private schools around the country, and some offer certain special facilities and advantages because of their locations. Parents who are interested in the possibility of such schools for their children can find considerable information describing the different schools in Porter Sargent's *Guide to Private Schools*.

Needless to say, the tuition at these schools is often fairly high, since it must cover not only the educational costs but also room and board, sports and recreational facilities, and all the varied services which the school must provide for adolescents who are living away from home. Many schools have scholarships, full or partial.

The desirability of sending a boy or girl to one of these schools turns upon a great many different factors. Sometimes it is very helpful to an individual boy or girl to go away from home, especially when living at home may involve certain stress and strain or difficulties, as in cases when there is considerable friction or conflict between brothers and sisters, or where an individual boy or girl may be overshadowed by a more active or brilliant brother or sister. Going away to school may give such a boy or girl, for the first time, an ability to expand or to develop as he or she could not in the home environment. Often the decision to send a child to boarding school is made when there is a separation or divorce in the family, and the adolescent (or sometimes a child of an earlier age) is sent to a boarding school as apparently the only solution to the problem of where the child can live when his home is broken up. It should be pointed out, however, that in cases of a separation or divorce the child may be more deeply disturbed and bewildered by being sent off to school, if this action appears to him to be a rejection.

It is now believed that in the case of divorce the child should have some professional advice and counsel to help him resolve some of his conflicting feelings, and especially to help him clarify his future relationship with the parents. Too often the adolescent boy or girl develops persistent bitterness toward both parents, or toward one of them, which may com-

promise his or her future development and prove a handicap in making a successful marriage.

Sometimes parents are inclined to send a child off to a boarding school or military school because they feel that he is unruly and beyond their ability to manage. Such a policy may be questioned on the ground that merely sending a child off to school, especially a school with very rigid regulations and stern discipline, may provide little or no help to the child in resolving his emotional problems and difficulties or in learning self-discipline. In some cases a boy or girl may accept the new situation and conform without difficulty, finding in the school program a welcome relief from the indecisions and conflicts that he may have experienced in his own home. In other cases the boy or girl may become even more rebellious or get into frequent trouble, which might have been prevented or at least reduced if he had had the benefit of some professional guidance and, if necessary, treatment.

Sending a child off to boarding school involves many of the same situations and possible difficulties that occur when he or she goes off to college. Leaving home at an earlier age, when the boy or girl is just beginning to cope with the many difficult tasks of growing up, may prove either helpful or obstructive to his efforts to grow up. Much depends upon the kind of school, the teachers, and the traditions and practices of the school itself.

Some people are inclined to believe that segregating young adolescent boys or girls in schools where they may rarely see members of the opposite sex of their own age may not be desirable because they miss the give and take of early adolescent friendships, and opportunities to learn from living with a group of boys and girls. These possible disadvantages can be and often are met by the school's efforts to provide for contact with boys and girls of the same age. The coeducational boarding schools have had a very reassuring record of providing an educational program with group living; this has proved very helpful to the students attending, and despite the anxiety that sometimes is expressed about the dangers of having adolescent boys and girls at the same school, the record indicates that the relationships between boys and girls in these schools is as wholesome and desirable as in any other situation, indeed often better than in their home towns, since the school can and often does maintain a morale among its students that is not always found in the usually unsupervised social life at home.

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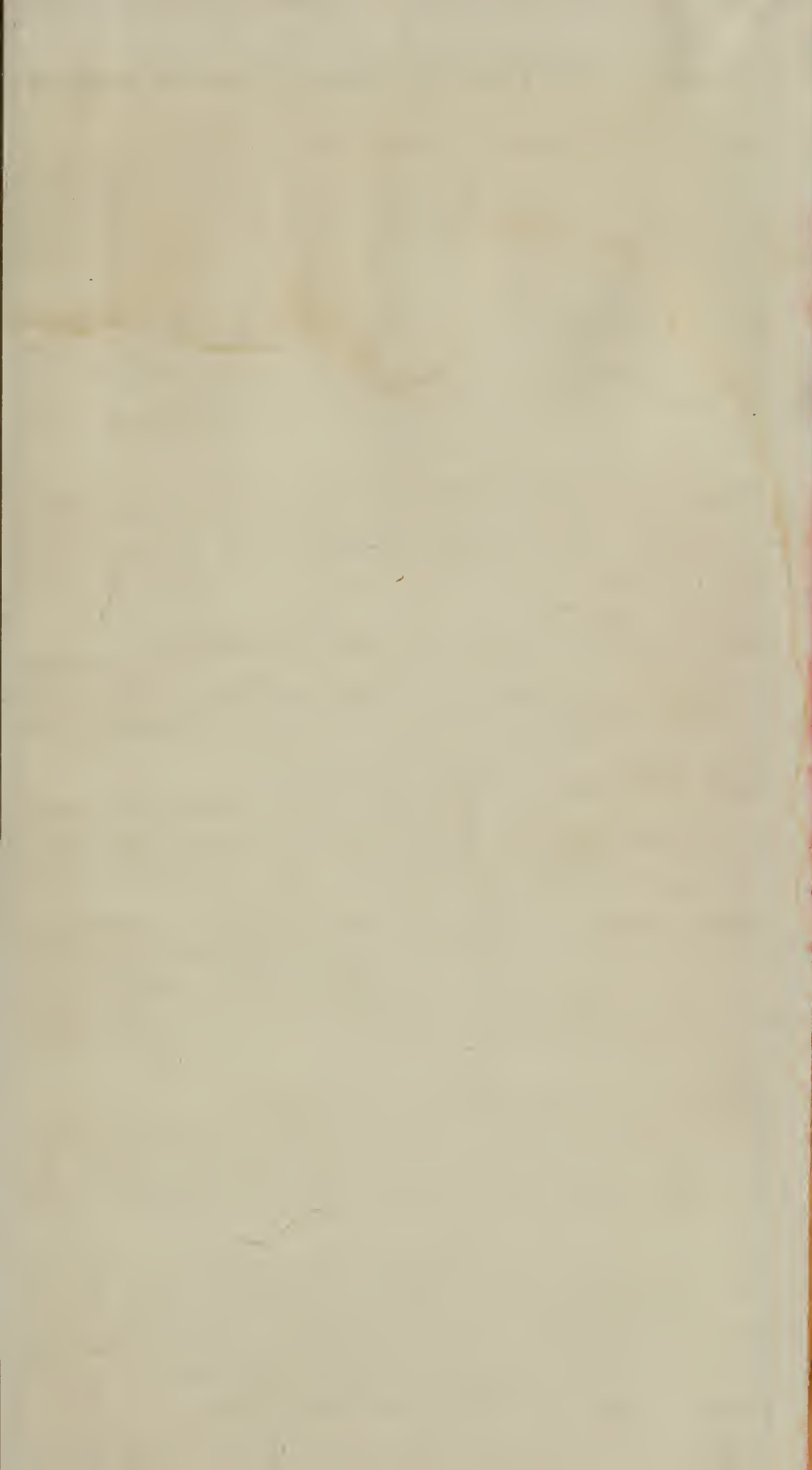
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MARY AND LAWRENCE K. FRANK are the parents of six children and have been associated for many years with parent guidance work. They are the authors of *How to Help Your Child in School*, a book which won the Parents' Magazine Book Medal Award, and which is also available in a Signet Key edition. *Your Adolescent at Home and in School* was originally published by The Viking Press.



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